

Statement of Christina Kennelly
House Ways and Means Committee
January 24, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE HB 78

My name is Christina Kennelly, a Maryland resident and mother of a 3 year old with several severe food allergies. I am testifying in favor of HB 78.

My child suffers from anaphylactic food allergies to peanuts, eggs, tree nuts, and sesame (4 of the top 9 allergens). This bill will provide life-saving protections for my child when he starts Maryland public schools next year, as well as thousands of other Maryland children.

Improvement of training of teachers and other staff, improvement of communication between parents and the school, designation of safe areas for allergy children, and increasing ways to include allergy children safely in more activities is a minimum of what Maryland public schools can and should be doing to protect its students and provide them with equal educational opportunities.

Every day, my child walks a minefield of potentially life-threatening consequences. When he starts school next year, he will be out of my direct supervision and too young to protect himself. I will be relying totally on the school staff to keep him safe. That is why the protections and improved processes provided by this bill are essential not only to my child receiving an excellent Maryland public education, but also to him literally staying alive.

Please, on behalf of my son and thousands of other children like him, support HB 78.

Christina Kennelly