



TO: The Honorable Pam Beidle, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Arthur Ellis

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: February 8, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – Senate Bill 59 – *Safe Sleep for Infants – Awareness and Certification*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support with amendment** for Senate Bill 59.

Senate Bill 59 requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop and implement a public awareness campaign to promote education regarding safe sleep for infants. The bill also would establish a Maryland Safe Sleep Certification Program and requires childcare centers to be certified by the Program as well as requiring hospitals and freestanding birthing centers to be certified by the Cribs for Kids' National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification Program.

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), which includes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), is the leading cause of injury death in infancy. Sleep is a big challenge for families with babies, but following safe sleep recommendations can prevent many SUID fatalities. The rate of sleep-related infant deaths declined significantly in the 1990s after the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and others recommended that babies be placed on their backs to sleep, but rates have since plateaued, and SIDS remains the leading cause of post-neonatal mortality. Black and Native American/Alaska Native infants die at rates more than double that of white babies. The AAP is committed to helping guide conversations about safe sleep with families, with the objective of making safe infant sleep the norm.

While MDAAP strongly supports the provisions of Senate Bill 59 related to the public awareness campaign, they would prefer the bill be amended to couple the public awareness campaign with a framework for educating mothers and families about safe sleep prior to the time of discharge and providing those families with information on resources available after discharge. Such a framework will enhance the likelihood that the parents/guardians and other family members will adopt safe sleep practices from

day 1 after discharge. Early adoption of safe sleep practices will significantly decrease the likelihood of preventable infant deaths from unsafe sleep practices.

MDAAP would also suggest the bill be amended to recognize the need to continue to provide resources and education on safe sleep practices throughout the first year of life by convening relevant stakeholders to identify avenues to enhance patient education about safe sleep practices and available resources. With the adoption of the suggested amendments, MDAAP urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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