



January 31, 2025

Testimony of Laura Hale  
American Heart Association

**Favorable HB 56 Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing**

Dear Chair Pena-MeInyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Honorable Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today. The American Heart Association extends its strong support for HB 56 Procurement - State Department of Education - Control Authority - Local Food Purchasing. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

For children to succeed in school, it is essential that they have a healthy lunch and a healthy breakfast. A hungry child cannot learn. Children cannot succeed without proper nutrition, and we know that for most children they receive up to half of their daily calories from school meals<sup>1</sup>. School Nutrition Directors work hard to create balanced meals for our children and this legislation will help to make that easier. By simplifying the processing for school food procurement more dollars will be invested in Maryland farmers to feed Maryland's children.

This legislation also works to address invasive species in the bay which has been a highly successfully pilot program in Caroline County. The children love the catfish that is served (and healthy) and is helping to cut down on this invasive species in the bay.

The legislation will help schools get more locally grown healthy food into school meals. The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on House Bill 56.

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<sup>1</sup> [School Nutrition Environment | Healthy Schools | CDC](#)