



House Ways and Means Committee
House Economic Matters Committee
March 6, 2025

House Bill 1469 – *Taxes – Sugary Beverage Distributor Tax (For Our Kids Act)*
POSITION: SUPPORT

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 for House Bill 1469.

House Bill 1469 proposes a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages in Maryland and directs the resulting revenue toward student meal programs. This bill represents a critical step in promoting child health and addressing nutritional disparities among Maryland's youth.

As pediatricians, we see firsthand the alarming rates of childhood obesity, type 2 diabetes, and other diet-related illnesses that stem from the excessive consumption of sugary beverages. Research has consistently shown that sugar sweetened beverages are a leading contributor to these health concerns. The recent study published in *JAMA Network Open* underscores the effectiveness of city-level taxes on sugary drinks in reducing youth body mass index (BMI) percentiles. These findings strongly support the argument that such taxation can lead to meaningful public health improvements, particularly for children and adolescents who are at the highest risk of obesity-related diseases.

Furthermore, allocating the tax revenue to student meal programs would help ensure that children in Maryland receive access to nutritious, balanced meals, reinforcing healthier eating habits, and reducing food insecurity. A similar initiative in other jurisdictions has demonstrated positive outcomes by improving the availability of healthier food options for students who need them the most. The integration of this policy would benefit both public health and educational outcomes, making a lasting impact on the well-being of Maryland's children. For these reasons, MDAAP urges a favorable vote.

For more information call:

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