



**HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
AND HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE**

HOUSE BILL 1469

TAXES - SUGARY BEVERAGE DISTRIBUTOR TAX (FOR OUR KIDS ACT)

MARCH 6, 2025

INFORMATIONAL

Agudath Israel of Maryland, the Mid-Atlantic regional office for Agudath Israel of America – a renowned national Jewish advocacy organization with chapters across the country - speaks on behalf of the Orthodox Jewish communities and our many parents, families, schools, and students across Maryland. We issue this testimony today in regards to House Bill 1469.

House Bill 1469 would impose a tax on distributors of certain sugary beverages, syrups, and powders for the privilege of selling those products to certain retailers or offering those products for sale to consumers in Maryland. Revenue generated will be used to fund two critical initiatives: universal school meals for all students under the Health School Meals for All Fund, and the Child Care Scholarship Program.

Access to nutritious meals is essential for students' well-being, academic success, and overall development. Too many families across Maryland face significant barriers to affording healthy and balanced meals for their children, particularly in underserved communities. The Healthy School Meals for All Fund would address the critical need for food security and help eliminate the stigma often associated with receiving school meals.

Affordable and reliable child care is a heavy challenge for many working families. The Child Care Scholarship Program has proven a crucial tool for promoting equitable workforce participation. The Child Care Scholarship Program is an essential investment in the future of Maryland's children and families.

We urge you to consider the importance of school nutrition and the prospective Healthy School Meals for All Fund, and affordable child care and the Child Care Scholarship Program, in the course of considering House Bill 1469.

Thank you.