

House Bill 1469, For Our Kids Act: Favorable

House Ways and Means Committee

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Committee,

I am writing as a parent and a member of the disability community in support of HB1469, the For Our Kids Act. In a year where Maryland is facing a significant budget shortfall with federal cuts looming as well as rising public health concerns tied to the overconsumption of sugary drinks, I believe this bill is a positive approach to both the budget crisis and our collective health.

Benefits of HB1469:

1. Sugary drinks are the leading source of added sugar in children's diets and significantly contribute to obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. A sugary drinks tax can reduce consumption, improving public health outcomes and saving Maryland millions in healthcare costs.
2. Revenue from the tax will directly benefit children and families. The funds will expand access to free early care and education slots and support the free school meals program, two vital initiatives that create long-term benefits for Maryland's communities and economy. It will also send dollars back to the general fund and can help support programs that fund our most vulnerable citizens.

As a working mother of two and disability advocate, I believe this bill will promote healthier choices for Maryland's children and support working families by increasing access to nutritious school meals and affordable childcare through a sugary drink tax. I ask for a favorable report on House Bill 1569 and urge members of the committee to support the tax and help build a brighter, healthier future for Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warmly,
Katrina Emmerson Kugel
2813 Covington Rd
Silver Spring, Maryland