



**HB 1469**

**For Our Kids Act**

*Before the Ways and Means Committee*

March 6, 2025

**Position: FAV**

Dear Delegate Shetty and members of the committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation – representing 10,000 healthcare workers in long-term care facilities and hospitals across Maryland. We strongly support HB 1469 which would invest in healthy choices for our neighborhoods and Maryland families.

For too long, sugary drink companies have targeted Black and Brown communities with ads and promotions for sodas, fruit drinks and sweet tea - products that have been proven to lead to serious health problems. Overconsumption of these sugary drinks have been tied to heart disease, diabetes and chronic tooth decay and erosion, all of which are preventable. 1199SEIU knows that investing in preventative health and thriving communities will make sure our healthcare systems are not overburdened with preventable diseases and emergencies.

This bill, also known as the For Our Kids Act, does more than encourage healthier choices. It helps fund important programs like early childhood education and childcare, giving kids a head start, and helping parents stay at work or in school and guarantee healthy school meals for all students in Maryland public schools. These investments can break the cycle of poverty and create better opportunities for families.

Raising the price of these drinks a little can lower how much people drink them while also putting money into programs that help our communities thrive. For those reasons, 1199SEIU urges a favorable report on HB 1469.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones  
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