



## **Testimony on HB 1469- Sugary Beverage Distributor Tax (For our Kids Act)**

**Position:** Favorable

The Maryland State Conference of the NAACP strongly urges the passage of **House Bill 1469**.

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 and yet prevalent in my neighborhood.

Why is that the case? Just down the street from where I live, I can get a can of what is essentially liquid sugar for less than the cost of a bottle of water. But House Bill 1469 gives us a chance to push back and invest in our neighborhoods instead.

This bill 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.

The NAACP urges lawmakers to pass this bill for a healthier and stronger Maryland.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 1469.

Thank You,

Ricarra Jones

Maryland State Conference of the NAACP