

Dear Maryland State Senators,

My name is Annette Love and I am a proud registered Democrat from Silver Spring. Thank you for taking the time to read my written testimony on this very important issue.

Vaccines are a critical part of public health in our country. Families should have access to them and be encouraged to follow guidance grounded in medical expertise. My opposition to SB385 is not about rejecting vaccines or public health. It is about process, governance, and ensuring that vaccine policy in Maryland remains evidence-based, transparent, and accountable to the public.

Regardless of its intent, this legislation appears to be a reaction to instability or politicization at the federal level. Many voters share concerns about leadership decisions affecting the CDC, myself included. However, state law should not be built in response to a temporary political moment. Laws passed out of fear often outlast the circumstances that created them and can introduce new, unintended risks.

If the concern is that too much authority could be concentrated in one individual at the federal level, this bill does not solve that problem—it recreates it in Maryland. Shifting authority from a nationally recognized public health agency to an unelected state appointee concentrates power rather than dispersing it.

This bill transfers significant public health decision-making authority to the Secretary of Health, an unelected official appointed by the governor. Vaccine policy affects every family in the state and should remain subject to democratic oversight, transparency, and accountability.

Concentrating this authority in a single appointed role reduces legislative involvement and limits meaningful public recourse.

This structure also creates instability. Governors change. Administrations change. If future leadership holds very different views on vaccines, Maryland's policies could shift dramatically without legislative debate or voter accountability. That kind of instability breeds confusion, mistrust, and lower vaccination rates—the opposite of what strong public health policy should achieve.

Under the current system, elected officials remain accountable to voters when policy changes are made. Maryland voters have consistently supported evidence-based vaccine policies. Removing this authority from the legislature weakens public trust and disconnects decision-making from the people most affected by it.

Good governance means building systems that are resilient no matter who is in office, not systems dependent on trusting the “right” person. I urge you to oppose SB385 and maintain Maryland's alignment with established, evidence-based public health guidance that includes transparency, legislative oversight, and public accountability.

Sincerely,

Annette Love