

Good Afternoon,

Dear Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to you to ask you to fully support on the Bill HB0073 which Require the State Board of Education to develop, by July 1, 2027, a curriculum content for an elective course in water safety and swimming for public school students in kindergarten through grade 8; requiring, beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, county boards of education to implement the water safety and swimming curriculum content for students in kindergarten through grade 8 in public schools in the county; etc.

Why is this important? Because my son with autism had a near-drowning experience near a lake in our community where we lived.

After the incident, I enrolled my son for swim lessons, and the cost for each lesson was 200 dollars for five classes of 30 minutes each.

We did the session on many occasions, but real families in Maryland are struggling to have funds with the high cost of living and electric bills to additionally put our children in swim lessons. There will be many sessions for my son to learn to swim one day.

My own experience is similar to that of many parents who want to teach their children, but it is highly expensive to use a public pool, and more if you have to pay for swimming lessons.

That is why students in our community need to learn to swim or learn how to be safe in water or open water in the communities.

We lose special needs children already because of their curiosity to be near water without knowledge of the danger.

Swimming is a life skill, and it should be given at no cost to our students. It one day saved their lives.

Please respectfully support the Bill HB0073.

The communities in Maryland, the students, and my family appreciated your time and dedication to your work.

Jimara kocik

Autism Society of Maryland
Board of Directors