



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 73 - Public Schools - Water Safety and Swimming Course - Established. This important legislation strengthens student safety and promotes equitable access to life-saving skills by ensuring that Maryland students receive instruction in water safety and swimming as part of their educational experience.

Drowning remains one of the leading causes of accidental death for children nationwide, and disparities in access to swimming instruction have contributed to higher risks in underserved communities. **House Bill 73** addresses this public safety concern by directing the State Board of Education to develop curriculum content that equips students with essential water safety knowledge and swimming awareness. By integrating these skills into the educational environment, Maryland can help prevent tragic accidents and ensure that children develop confidence and safety awareness around water.

This legislation is particularly meaningful for communities that historically have had limited access to swimming education and aquatic facilities. For many families, swimming lessons can be financially inaccessible, leaving children without opportunities to develop these critical life skills. Incorporating water safety education into public schools helps close these opportunity gaps and ensures that every child, regardless of background, has the chance to learn how to stay safe in and around water. **House Bill 73** also supports broader goals of student health, physical activity, and confidence building. Swimming is not only a life-saving skill but also an important form of physical exercise that contributes to overall wellness.

Ultimately, **House Bill 73** represents a proactive investment in student well-being and public safety. By establishing a statewide water safety and swimming curriculum, Maryland affirms its commitment to protecting children, expanding access to essential life skills, and creating safer communities.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland respectfully urges a favorable report on **House Bill 73**.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland