



TO: The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chair
Members, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Jay Walker

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: March 3, 2021

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1296 – *Public School Students – Daily Physical Activity (Student Health and Fitness Act)*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 1296.

House Bill 1296 requires that all students in kindergarten through grade 5 participate in a specified amount of physical activity. The increasing incidence of childhood obesity, and its significant social and health consequences are appropriately receiving increased attention from health professionals, educators, and public policy makers. A critical component of any successful strategy to combat childhood obesity is increased physical activity. Given the amount of a child's day that is spent in school, mandatory requirements for physical education are logical, cost-effective, and produce significant benefits in the health and social well-being of students.

The benefits of physical activity are not limited to efforts to control weight. Physical activity provides a range of significant health benefits including, but not limited to, increased muscle strength and aerobic endurance, increased bone mass, and prevention and reduction of high blood pressure. Furthermore, there is increased evidence that academic performance and behavior control is enhanced with increased physical activity.

MDAAP applauds the Sponsor for his continued leadership on issues regarding childhood obesity, health, and physical education. While few students are now attending school in-person, when the public health emergency passes and students are back in school, the beneficial impact of this legislation on the health, well-being, and academic performance of students will be significant. House Bill 1296 is a modest and well-justified approach to incorporating the unquestionable benefits of physical activity into the curriculum of our schools.

For more information call:

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