
MARYLAND ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



Date: February 3, 2022

Bill: Senate Bill 263 - Health - Food Service Facilities - Beverage Options With Children's Meals

Committee: Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Delores Kelley, Chair

Position: **Support**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB0263. As the State Policy Representatives for the Maryland Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, we are speaking for about 1200 registered and licensed Dietitians in the State of Maryland. Dietitian/Nutritionists' mission is to educate the citizens of Maryland on how healthy nutrition and lifestyles prevent chronic diseases.

We ask that you give this bill a favorable report.

Dietitian/Nutritionists spend a lot of time professionally teaching people how to make small changes to steer them toward a healthy lifestyle. We work with people who may be trying to lose weight, to increase their activity and follow a balanced diet. However, most people have no idea what a balanced diet means.

Senate Bill 263 is a start at a teaching moment. It makes parents stop for a second before they decide if they should give their kids the healthy, free water, unsweetened milk or nutritionally equivalent milk substitute, etc. or pay more for the sugary drink that the kids may be used to. For example, when the Anne Arundel Medical Center made bottled water the least expensive drink in the cafeteria, the hospital became the largest provider of bottled water of any hospital on the East Coast.

This country is paying a huge price in health and healthcare costs because we have ignored good nutrition for too long. Think of the co-morbidities that put those getting Covid at more risk: obesity, heart disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancer. Think of how many of those diseases could be prevented or improved by adopting a good diet and lifestyle.

While the bill still allows choices, perhaps we can make customers stop and think for a moment. We urge your support of SB0263 for the health of our children and families at a time when we should be concentrating on prevention.

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