

Thank you Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and Honorable Members of the Finance Committee for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Reed Wise and I am a Public Health student at Johns Hopkins as well as a medical student at Nova Southeastern University. Additionally, I have earned a Masters of Science in Physiology and Biophysics from Georgetown University. I speak today in strong support of Senate Bill 263.

Children are the world's greatest resource, and as advocates and legislators, it is our duty to ensure that they are given the tools to be as successful as possible in today's immensely complicated world. It has been well documented in the literature, including publications from the American Association of Pediatrics, that excessive consumption of sugary beverages is linked to childhood obesity and other worsening health outcomes such as tooth decay, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, fatty liver disease, and all-cause mortality among others (1). The switch to water and other unsweetened beverages as the default for school lunches will give all our students the healthiest option from day one, while still maintaining the freedom of choice for children and their families to enjoy a soda on occasion if they so desire. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to your committee.

I urge a favorable report on SB 263.

(1) <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/14112>