

Baltimore County Council



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The PTA Council of Baltimore County, the official parent stakeholder group of Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) which supports and trains nearly 150 PTA units in BCPS and represents thousands of PTA members, supports **House Bill 1147 (HB1147): Environment – Playground Surfacing Materials – Prohibitions.**

We support this bill because it is a principle of our mission to promote the safety and well-being of all children and youth.

As a parent of young children, I was never a fan of tree mulch used as a playground surface. It gets in kids' shoes, young toddlers have a tendency to pick it up and throw it, it is dirty, and it just is not aesthetically pleasing. I was very happy, as were many other parents, when newer playgrounds started using nice "bouncy" surfaces. Falling off the equipment seemed safer because there is a cushiony surface to fall onto, there is no need to worry about kids getting mulch in their eyes or hair, and the playgrounds look great, painted vibrant blues and greens.

The evolution of playgrounds seemed to be moving in the right direction. Parents were feeling that children's best interests were being considered when playgrounds were constructed. But this unfortunately turned out not to be the case.

As we know now, the natural tree mulch, is actually safer for our children for several reasons. These new surfaces, while nice looking, contain dangerous levels of both PFAS and PAH which are known to be hazardous especially to growing and developing children. PFAS and PAH can leach out of the tire crumb/rubber surface and be absorbed through contact with skin, inhalation, and hand-to-mouth activity. Both of these toxic chemicals may be expected to be carcinogens. And exposure to these substances can lead to many health problems for our kids.

The PTA Council of Baltimore County urges a favorable vote in support of HB1147 for the benefit of BCPS students and our community.

Submitted on behalf of PTA Council of Baltimore County, Inc. by

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