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American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™
Maryland Chapter



TO: The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
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DATE: March 15, 2017

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 1089 – *Primary and Secondary Education – Health and Safety Guidelines and Procedures – Digital Devices*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) submit this letter of **support** for Senate Bill 1089.

Senate Bill 1089 Requires the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), in consultation with the State Department of Education (MSDE), to develop health and safety guidelines and procedures for the use of digital devices in public school classrooms. Each county board of education is then required to implement the health and safety guidelines and procedures developed by DHMH and MSDE beginning in the 2018-2019 school year.

Senate Bill 1089 aims to create a consistent regulatory structure for the use of digital devices in all public schools in Maryland. There is a growing body of evidence that there are serious potential health risks for children associated with excessive use of digital devices. While advances in and access to technology have enhanced educational opportunities for children; technology access can also present potential risks, if not regulated appropriately. It is critical that health and safety guidelines be developed to ensure that those risks are accounted for in the use of digital devices in the classrooms.

It is also important that there is consistency across all school districts. Currently there is a patchwork of policies and guidelines, in various school districts throughout the State, related to digital device use – with little evidence that existing policies consider potential health and safety risks. The approach provided in Senate Bill 1089 requires State level development of the guidelines, policies, and procedures that will reflect both health and safety as well as educational objectives. The comprehensive framework that results from that effort can then be adopted at the County level to ensure consistency statewide. It is an excellent approach to a challenging problem. MedChi and MDAAP strongly urge a favorable report.

For more information call:

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