



The Maryland State Medical Society

1211 Cathedral Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201-5516  
410.539.0871  
Fax: 410.547.0915

1.800.492.1056

www.medchi.org

# American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



TO: The Honorable Sheila E. Hixson, Chair  
Members, House Ways & Means Committee  
The Honorable Jay Walker

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

DATE: February 18, 2016

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 474 – *Elementary School Students – Daily Physical Activity*  
(*Student Health and Fitness Act*)

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The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) and the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) support House Bill 474.

House Bill 474 requires that all students in kindergarten through grade 5 participate in a specified amount of physical activity. The increasing incidence of childhood obesity, and the significant social and health consequences associated with this public health epidemic 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 help control weight. Physical activity in children provides a wide 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 and MedChi applaud the sponsor for his continued leadership on issues regarding childhood obesity, health, and physical education. House Bill 474 is a modest and well-justified approach to incorporating the unquestionable benefits of physical activity into the curriculum of our schools. MDAAP and MedChi strongly urge a favorable report.

**For more information call:**

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer

J. Steven Wise

Danna L. Kauffman

410-244-7000