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**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the
Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
For the Hearing on
Elementary School Students - Daily Physical Activity
(Student Health and Fitness Act)
(HB 393)
February 8, 2018
SUPPORT**

Maryland PTA represents thousands of volunteer members and families in 900 public schools. For nearly 103 years, our mission has been to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Maryland PTA is comprised of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, Maryland PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education.

Maryland PTA submits this testimony in support of House Bill 393, Elementary School Students - Daily Physical Activity (Student Health and Fitness Act). This bill requires that elementary school students be provided an opportunity to engage in at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week of which 90 of those minutes must be in physical education. Furthermore, the bill stipulates that any physical activity should be consistent with any applicable Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Maryland PTA strongly supports this bill given the unwavering decrease in the value of physical education in elementary public schools and in school in general. Physical education classes in American schools, during the past 30 years, have declined in importance and availability. Yet, daily physical education programs are an integral part of children's education. The U.S. Surgeon General, Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommend a minimum of 30 minutes of physical education, by accredited professional instructors, every school day for every elementary and secondary school student. Parents stress the significance of how their children need a physical outlet and teachers can attest to how using kinesthetic instruction assists their students' academic performance. Hence, accommodating the school schedule to account for such an integral part of a child's day is extremely important.

The passage of this bill will help eliminate the denial of recess as a disciplinary measure for academic reasons or inappropriate classroom behavior. The Maryland PTA hopes that the establishment of a physical activity leadership team that this bill creates will help curb such a negative practice and holistically integrate the needs of the whole student into instruction. Undoubtedly, a physical program is a compliment to academic instruction. School recess should include unstructured outdoor play as well as unstructured indoor play for inclement weather days, all of which is a part of elementary school learning.

Lastly, any physical education program should be developmentally appropriate, sequential, and cooperative in nature. Maryland PTA also appreciates how this bill considers how the IEPs of students play a role in the implementation of a physical education program. As Maryland PTA supports both adequate recess and physical education classes, we urge your vote to SUPPORT House Bill 393.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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