Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House of Delegates Environment and Transportation Committee For the Hearing on Environment - Drinking Water Outlets in School Buildings – Elevated Level of Lead and Grant Program (HB 1253)

March 6, 2019

SUPPORT

Maryland PTA is the state’s oldest and largest child advocacy organization that serves as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We represent thousands of volunteer members in 900 public schools and we are 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. For nearly 104 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 submits this testimony in support of House Bill 1253, Environment - Drinking Water Outlets in School Buildings - Elevated Level of Lead and Grant Program. This bill speaks to the necessity of regulations of environmental safety as it pertains to both the physical and mental health risks that can impair our children’s ability to learn and flourish as productive citizens.

Consider the innocence of the Kindergartener excited about the fact that they can finally reach the Water Fountain anxious for what appears to be a clear refreshing drink of water that is actually laced with lead-based particles, that could impair their capacity, if it is continuously ingested over time. Imagine the same child in 5th grade after four years of ingesting this lead based water throughout the course of his or her elementary tenure. Poisoned for over five years in elementary school without knowing, because legislative regulations to take action on the conditions did not exist prior to this moment. Some schools have actually had to shut the water off in their schools to keep children from poisoning themselves at the lead-based fountains while other schools have been able to circumvent the problem through the support of their affluent PTA’s or school community, to purchase and fund new aged water outlets or filtered drinking stations, within their schools.

This bill is relevant and necessary to the health and safety of our children, and it should provide them equal opportunity and access to obtain the necessary funds to support the implementation of clean drinking water in our schools.

It is for these reasons that Maryland PTA urges a favorable vote to SUPPORT House Bill 1253.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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