

Advocacy Alert

Council Bill 17-2015

HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE OPTIONS

On Monday, May 18 the County Council will hear public testimony on Council Bill 17-2015, introduced by Councilman Calvin Ball. The bill would provide healthy food and beverage options on certain County properties and for certain county programs. According to the Horizon Foundation, 60-plus cities and counties across the nation have passed similar legislation and are experiencing progress in reducing the impact of diseases such as diabetes and obesity. The primary requirements of the bill would:

- · Preserve and increase adults' choices: In most county vending machines and programs, there will be a mix of both healthy (75%) and less healthy (25%) food and drinks offered or sold.
- · Give children and parents healthy vending machine options: in parks, libraries and recreation centers (places where many children play or learn), all packaged food and drinks sold and served will be healthier to match the items children have available at school.
- · Encourage healthy choices: Healthier food and drink will be stocked together at eye level in vending machines so that purchasers can tell the difference between them and less healthy items. Purchasers would also get a 25-cent discount when buying a healthier drink -- making water more affordable.
- · Make reasonable exceptions: the 4th of July and Wine in the Woods would be exempted, although free water would be available upon request. Nonprofits, such as booster clubs, will also be free to sell any food and drink they wish on county property.

CALL TO ACTION: ACS encourages members to convey your thoughts regarding the intent and merits of this bill to County Council members as a step toward improving access to healthy food and drink choices for your clients and their children who participate in programs at county facilities. Sign-up for oral testimony is now open for the **Monday May 18 public hearing** through the Council website; or written comments can be submitted to the Howard County Council Administrator Jessica Feldmark (jfeldmark@howardcountymd.gov).

Questions about submitting testimony or comments or Council Bill 17-2015 can be directed to ACS Executive Director Joan Driessen (joan.driessen@acshoco.org) or Public Policy Committee chair Jackie Eng (Jacqueline.eng@verizon.net).

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