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 **“Maryland Healthy Vending Act” Fails to Gain Approval in Annapolis**

*Legislation Would Have Made Healthy Choices More Accessible in State Vending Machines*

**Annapolis, Md. –** Although it received an incredible amount of support from state congressional co-sponsors, industry leaders and coalition members, the measure to make healthier food and drinks more widely available in vending machines on state property known as the **Maryland Healthy Vending Act (**[**HB 1498; SB 602**](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?id=SB+602&stab=01&pid=billpage&tab=subject3&ys=2016RS)**)** was voted down by the Maryland Senate Finance Committee.

The legislation, proposed by **Sugar Free Kids Maryland**, the state’s leading voice in the fight against the twin epidemics of childhood obesity and teenage diabetes was heard by the House of Delegates on March 9 and the Senate on March 10.

If passed, the bill would have made healthier food and drinks more widely available in vending machines on state property. Specifically, 75 percent of the food and drinks offered in vending machines on state property would be required to meet healthy food and drink standards. Those snacks must meet national nutrition standards. The bill would also make those options more noticeable in vending machines, require that calorie labels be placed on or around vending machines, encourage water consumption and task the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) with providing technical assistance to procurement officials with monitoring and enforcing the law.

The Sugar Free Kids Maryland Board of Directors will meet soon to determine the future of the legislation.

“We have some work to do in preparation for next year’s legislative session, but the depth and diversity of our coalition is now clearer than ever,” said **Executive Director Robi Rawl**. “Together, with voices across Maryland, our coalition has built momentum for healthy vending and a healthy future. It’s only a matter of time before our joint efforts result in key changes that promote health and healthiness in the places Marylanders live, work and play.”

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**About Sugar Free Kids Maryland:**

*With 1 in 3 children classified as overweight or obese in Maryland and almost a quarter of teens being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes nationally, Sugar Free Kids was founded by the Horizon Foundation, the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the Maryland Conference of the NAACP, and the American Heart Association—Mid Atlantic Affiliate to advocate for evidence-based policies to reverse these trends. Following its launch in 2014, Sugar Free Kids successfully promoted legislation to improve the health and nutrition standards at child care centers in Maryland, and it has since added the Maryland Association of Student Councils as a lead partner.*