



## HOUSE BILL 1264

### Gwendolyn Britt Student Health and Fitness Act

March 4, 2009

#### **POSITION: Support**

Madame Chair and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

The restaurant industry has long been committed to promoting healthy lifestyles and proper nutrition. In fact, the Restaurant Association of Maryland is a member of the *Maryland Healthy Eating & Active Lifestyles Coalition*, which is a coordinated effort by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to promote better eating habits and stress the importance of physical activity.

Recently, there has been increased attention surrounding this important and complex issue, especially as it relates to childhood obesity. We believe that balance and moderation in our dietary choices, along with physical activity, are essential for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. We also believe that children have become far too sedentary in recent years, preferring to play video games, browse the internet and send phone text messages to their friends. In our neighborhoods, we rarely see children outside playing ball anymore.

Recognizing that restaurants are not solely to blame for childhood obesity, we strongly support House Bill 1264 and other efforts to improve daily physical education programs in Maryland's school systems. Achieving a healthy balance between the calories we consume and the calories we burn is a fundamental element of life-long good health. Elevating the importance of physical fitness in our school systems is a step in the right direction.

For these reasons, we support HB 1264 and request that you give this legislation a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Melvin R. Thompson  
Senior Vice President  
Government Affairs and Public Policy  
Restaurant Association of Maryland  
6301 Hillside Court  
Columbia, MD 21046  
410-290-6800