



## HOUSE BILL 334

### Public Schools - Physical Education Facilities

March 3, 2010

#### **POSITION: Support**

Madame Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of the members of the *Restaurant Association of Maryland*, we support House Bill 334, which would require the Maryland State Department of Education to adopt regulations requiring newly constructed and renovated school facilities to include gymnasiums to support physical education programs.

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 text messages to their friends. In our neighborhoods, we rarely see children outside playing ball any longer.

Recognizing that restaurants are not solely to blame for childhood obesity but can be part of a comprehensive approach to help combat it, we strongly support House Bill 334 and other efforts to improve access to 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 that should be taught early. Elevating the importance of physical fitness in our school systems is a step in the right direction.

For these reasons, we support HB 334 and request that you give this legislation a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Melvin R. Thompson  
Senior Vice President  
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