



Proponent Testimony for House Bill 360
January 21, 2020
House Commerce and Labor Committee

Chairwoman Manning, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony for House Bill 360.

My name is Joe Mazzola. I am the health commissioner at Franklin County Public Health and serve as president-elect of the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC). AOHC is the statewide nonprofit organization that represents the health commissioners of Ohio's 112 local health departments.

HB 360 would require water bottle filling stations in newly constructed school buildings in Ohio. The bill's sponsors, in their recent testimony before you, cited the research in support of greater access to water in schools, for its overall health benefits and its specific benefit in fighting the epidemic of childhood obesity. I would like to reiterate some of the health benefits, educational and economic benefits of making water the easy, appealing, and first choice for children and families as promoted by the state's Water First for Thirst campaign:

- A 20 oz. sugary drink can contain up to 240 calories and 17 teaspoons of sugar? Choosing water is a simple way to cut your sugar intake and improve your health.
- For youth especially, being dehydrated can make you feel unfocused and tired.
- Tap water is free of charge and free of calories- a great alternative to spending money on drinks that are full of calories and sugar.

More broadly, as local health officials, we support any effort to make healthy choices more available throughout our state and in our local communities. Ohio's

State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) identifies physical activity and nutrition as one of our state's strategic health priorities. In alignment, our local community health improvement plans, as developed by local health districts and their community partners, also reflect that priority to address obesity and chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Our school districts take very seriously the health of their students. The good news about HB 360 is it will likely not increase the cost of new school construction, because it would revise the existing requirement to incorporate water filling stations in place of water fountains. We also support this bill for the added benefit of reducing the waste generated by the consumption of bottled water.

In conclusion, AOHC asks for your support of House Bill 360. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.