



**American  
Heart  
Association.**

February 14, 2023

Representative Thomas, Chair  
House Committee on Education  
Proponent, HB2142

I am writing on behalf of the American Heart Association (The Association) in support of HB2142. The Association exists to be a relentless force for a world of longer healthier, lives. Water is a basic human need—something kids cannot live without. Because children spend so much time at school, having safe and appealing water available to them is critical.

- Drinking water supports children’s muscles, joints, and tissues; improves their digestive system; and keeps their growing bodies hydrated. <sup>i</sup>
- Adequate water intake can positively impact children’s cognitive performance, particularly short-term memory. Drinking water can also improve children’s visual attention and fine motor skills. <sup>ii</sup>
- Substituting sugary drinks with low or no calorie beverages, such as water, can prevent excess weight gain. <sup>iii</sup>

Studies show that replacing caloric beverages with non-caloric ones, such as water, results in average weight losses of 2 percent to 2.5 percent, and could cut up to 235 calories per day from the average American’s diet. In 2009–2012, a national survey of children ages 6–19 found that more than half (54.5 percent) of U.S. children and adolescents were inadequately hydrated. Inadequate hydration was more prevalent among boys, non-Hispanic black and younger children, compared to girls, non- Hispanic white and older children.<sup>iv</sup>

**That’s why The Association encourages this committee to go even further to enact a “filter first policy”** requiring that filtered bottle filling stations be installed as the first lead mitigation measure. This will increase access to drinking fountains in schools encouraging water consumption throughout the school day and during school-based activities. Enacting policies that ensure all newly constructed schools and schools undergoing major renovations have bottle filling stations is key.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kari A. Rinker".

Kari Rinker, MPA  
State Government Relations Director  
American Heart Association

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<sup>i</sup> Jéquier E, Constant F. Water as an essential nutrient: the physiological basis of hydration. *Eur J Clin Nutr.* 2010; 64(2):115-23, doi: 10.1038/ejcn.2009.111.

<sup>ii</sup> Masento NA, Golightly M, Field DT, Butler LT, van Reekum CM. Effects of hydration status on cognitive performance and mood. *Br J Nutr.* 2014; 111(10):1841-52, doi: 10.1017/S0007114513004455.

<sup>iii</sup> Armfield JM, Spencer AJ, Roberts-Thomson KF, Plastow K. Water fluoridation and the association of sugarsweetened beverage consumption and dental caries in Australian children. *Am J Public Health.* 2013; 103(3):494-500, doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2012.300889.

<sup>iv</sup> Zheng M, Allman-Farinelli M, Heitmann BL, Rangan A. Substitution of sugar-sweetened beverages with other beverage alternatives: a review of long-term health outcomes. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2015; 115(5):767-79, doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2015.01.006.