

Dear Committee on Children,

I am a pediatrician who works in New Haven and Advocacy Chair for the CT-American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter. These are my personal views and do not reflect those of my employer.

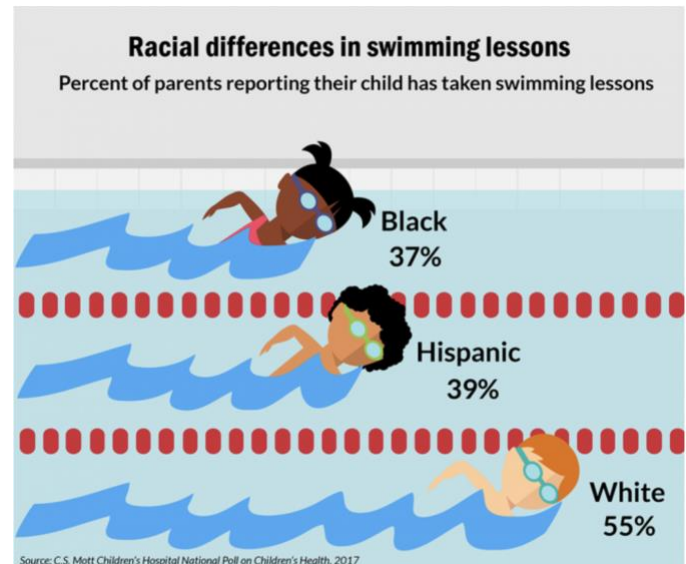
I am writing in **support** of **SB 1218 An Act Concerning Water Safety and Swim Instruction**.

CT has hot, humid summers and many families utilize beaches, lakes and swimming pools to stay cool and enjoy the outdoors which is important for a child's physical and mental health.

[In the US](#), drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 years old and the second most common cause of death for children 5-14 years old. [The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) highlights critical strategies to prevent drowning deaths including water competency, swim lessons, and swim skills.

[Drowning deaths](#) do not affect all children equally with [drowning rates](#) being 1.5 times higher for non-

Hispanic Black individuals when compared with non-Hispanic White individuals. Only 39% of Hispanic children and 37% of Black children [report taking swim lessons](#), compared with 55% of White children (image below).



Black or Hispanic children in CT are [more likely to live in poverty](#), making access to swim lessons more challenging or even impossible. SB 1218 would work to increase access to swim lessons for those families who struggle financially, provide a potential lifesaving intervention, and address a health disparity.

Thank you for considering my testimony. Please reach out with questions.

Sincerely,

**Molly Markowitz, MD FAAP**

Chair, Advocacy Committee

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