

HOUSE BILL 356

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By: **Delegates Pendergrass, Atterbeary, Ebersole, Hammen, S. Howard, Jalisi, Jameson, Kipke, Kramer, Krebs, Lam, Luedtke, Malone, Patterson, Pena-Melnyk, Saab, Tarlau, Turner, West, and K. Young**

Introduced and read first time: January 27, 2016

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits – Exclusion of**
3 **Sugar–Sweetened Beverages and Other Nonnutritious Foods**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Human Resources to request permission
5 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to exclude sugar–sweetened beverages and,
6 at the Department’s discretion, certain other foods from the food items that may be
7 purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits; requiring the
8 Department to report to the Governor and the General Assembly, beginning on a
9 certain date and at certain intervals, on the status of the request; providing for the
10 termination of this Act; and generally relating to the use of Supplemental Nutrition
11 Assistance Program benefits.

12 Preamble

13 WHEREAS, Reducing consumption of calories from added sugars is a
14 recommendation of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and an objective of the
15 Healthy People 2020 initiative; and

16 WHEREAS, Sugar–sweetened beverages are major sources of added sugars in the
17 diets of U.S. residents; and

18 WHEREAS, Daily consumption of sugar–sweetened beverages is associated with
19 obesity and other chronic health conditions, including Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular
20 disease; and

21 WHEREAS, Low–income persons consume more sugar–sweetened beverages in
22 relation to their overall diet than those with higher incomes; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, More than one-half (52%) of sugar-drink kilocalories are consumed in
2 the home and, of these sugar-drink kilocalories, the vast majority (92%) are purchased in
3 stores; and

4 WHEREAS, The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest
5 nutrition assistance program in the country; and

6 WHEREAS, The goals of SNAP are to improve participants' food security and their
7 access to a healthy diet; and

8 WHEREAS, In fiscal year 2015, approximately 800,000 Maryland residents
9 participated in SNAP each month, at a cost to taxpayers of about \$1.15 billion; now,
10 therefore,

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
12 That:

13 (a) On or before January 1, 2017, the Department of Human Resources shall
14 request permission from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to exclude sugar-sweetened
15 beverages and, at the discretion of the Department, other nonnutritious foods from the food
16 items that are eligible to be purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
17 benefits.

18 (b) Beginning January 1, 2017, and every 6 months thereafter, the Department
19 of Human Resources shall submit a report to the Governor and, in accordance with §
20 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on the status of the request.

21 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
22 October 1, 2016. It shall remain effective for a period of 4 years and, at the end of September
23 30, 2020, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be
24 abrogated and of no further force and effect.