



March 5, 2020

2020 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL: HB1175: Higher Education - Hunger Free Campus Grant Program - Established
COMMITTEE: House Appropriations Committee
POSITION: Testimony of Support of House Bill 1175
BILL ANALYSIS: Establishing the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program to address student hunger and basic food needs on campus; requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to administer the Program and to designate certain campuses as hunger-free campuses that satisfy certain criteria and assist students in enrolling in the Maryland Food Supplement Program; authorizing certain institutions of higher education to develop certain procedures; etc.

Dear Chair McIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill as it seeks to protect food access for food-insecure Maryland college students.

The rapid increase in college costs and reduced funding in student aid has resulted in significant unmet need, meaning that many low-income students are borrowing more money, working more hours, taking fewer courses, or dropping out altogether. When seeking employment opportunities, students are limited by their school schedules. After deducting necessities such as rent, tuition, electricity, medication and childcare, college students are often left without adequate funds to spend on food.

Without proper nutrition, students face the risk of poor concentration, depression, and other negative effects on their ability to study and complete their courses. Currently, approximately 20% of students at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD-CP) are food insecure¹, which is a 15% increase from 2015. During the 2018-2019 academic year, 790 students at UMD-CP visited the campus pantry, with a total of 2,559 visits. UMD-CP found that food-insecure students typically had lower GPAs, and were more likely to withdraw from the school before finishing their degree, compared to food secure students. This negatively impacts our local economy by affecting the quality of our workforce. School meal programs are a proven strategy to significantly reduce food insecurity and improve educational outcomes, and the Hunger Free Campus Grant Program would promote a healthier, more capable student population in higher-education institutions throughout Maryland.

For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports HB1175 and urges you to vote **FOR** this bill.

The Montgomery County Food Council is an independent council formed and led by individual community members and representatives of local businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Our mission is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system. Our vision is to cultivate a vibrant food system in Montgomery County that consciously produces, distributes, and recycles food, making

¹ 2019 Survey conducted by Dr. Yu-Wei Wang at the University of Maryland, College Park



it accessible to all residents while promoting the health of the local food economy, its consumers, and the environment.
For more information, please contact: Heather Bruskin, MCFC Executive Director at the email and phone number below.

