

**House Bill 1175**  
**Higher Education - Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program - Established**  
**House Appropriations Committee**  
**March 5, 2020**

**Letter of Information**

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on House Bill 1175. This Bill establishes the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program to address student hunger and basic food needs on campus. Components of this Bill including establishing a food pantry and developing a meal sharing program to allow students to donate unused meals from their meal plan to those in need. St. Mary's College seeks to promote the well-being of all students, regardless of their economic status. The College supports the goals of the Bill with respect to reducing hunger on campus.

We have concerns, however, with certain provisions of the Bill. First, the Bill's provisions for sharing unused meals is based on an incorrect assumption that a meal not eaten by student could be shared with other students at no cost. Meal plans, however, build into their pricing that students do not eat 100% of the meals they could eat under their meal plan.

The College prepares food to meet the daily demand. We do not purchase enough food and hire staff to cover the full amount of meals that potentially could be eaten on any given day. Meeting the actual demand, rather than the potential demand, lowers our costs, which allows us to lower the cost to the student and reduces food waste. Therefore, if the number of meals consumed increases through a donated meal program, then the amount of food prepared will increase, as will the cost. The College would need to pass the cost to the students who do purchase meal plans.

Also, several years ago, the College restructured its meal plans in large part to eliminate the majority of unused meals. Approximately two-thirds of our students participate in an "unlimited" meal plan, which allows them to eat at our dining hall as many times a day as they want. Under these plans, there are no "unused" meals that could be donated, except for a limited amount of guest passes.

Finally, the Bill states that unused meals need to be used to support a campus food pantry. Because the College does not have any "leftovers," it would not be possible to implement this provision.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Mary's College of Maryland.



Tuajuanda C. Jordan, Ph.D.  
President



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