



**To:** Chair, Delores G. Kelley, Vice-Chair Brian J. Feldman, Senate Finance Committee

**From:** Maryland Hunger Solutions

**Re:** Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 787: Family Investment Administration – Temporary Cash Assistance – Eligibility

**Date:** March 6, 2020

Maryland Hunger Solutions supports SB 787, which establishes 75% of a household's Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) grant as the child's portion that will no longer be allowed to be sanctioned. Under this bill, the remaining 25% will be considered the adult portion, of which 30% can be sanctioned.

Although Maryland is one of the wealthiest states in the country, not all Marylanders share in this wealth equally. In the current 2019-2020 school year, over 387,000 or 42% of Maryland's children are enrolled to receive free or reduced-price meals at school, meaning that they come from households with incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level. Approximately 170,000 of these children are from households that are also enrolled in SNAP<sup>i</sup>.

While SNAP and the school meal programs are critical components to addressing childhood hunger, many families that rely on these programs must also rely on additional benefits programs, such as TCA, to make ends meet and take care of everyday expenses that SNAP cannot be used to cover, such as housing, transportation, and other basic necessities.

Although these programs exist to help struggling families, the current limit in Maryland for the amount of TCA benefits that a family can receive, when combined with federal SNAP benefits, is set at 61% of the Maryland Minimum Living Level (MLL). This is what makes full family TCA sanctions so damaging. These families are already surviving on extremely limited budgets, which makes them vulnerable to hardships such as extreme food insecurity and even eviction.

By reserving 75% of the TCA grant for children, Maryland is taking an important step towards ending childhood hunger and food insecurity in Maryland by protecting our most vulnerable citizens from losing access to basic needs such as housing and access to healthy food.

Thank you for your consideration. Maryland Hunger Solutions respectfully urges a favorable report on SB 787.

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<sup>i</sup> Maryland State Department of Education. (2020). *Free and Reduced-Price and Percent of Enrollment by Agency as of October 31, 2019*. <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/SchoolandCommunityNutrition/Pages/FreeReducedPriceMealStatistic.aspx>