

February 20, 2023

2023 Session Support Testimony

HB0628/SB0557: Education - Primary and Secondary Education – Breakfast and Lunch Programs – Universal Expansion

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
POSITION: Testimony of Support for House Bill 628
BILL ANALYSIS: Universal
SIGNED: Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FRSC)

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record **in SUPPORT of H.B. 0628**. This letter is submitted by the Co-Chair of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) on behalf of the Council and does not necessarily represent the views of the State of Maryland. The FSRC was established by the Maryland General Assembly in the 2021 legislative session to bring together 33 appointed council members from across the state, all with different points of entry and expertise, to work towards a common goal of a more resilient food system and address the food insecurity crisis due to COVID-19. One of the key mandates of this council was to develop equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the Maryland food system.

The FSRC believes this legislation will advance the goal of ensuring that every Maryland public school can serve breakfast and lunch. One of the most impactful programs of the pandemic response to COVID-19 was the implementation of universal school meal programs across the state of Maryland and across the nation. It ensured that every student could receive breakfast and lunch, helping to fuel the brains and bodies of more than 900,000 students across our state. Many states across the nation have continued this important investment, helping to eliminate school meal debts for school nutrition departments and low income families. The Council hopes that the Committee will support this important initiative, and requests a favorable vote for Healthy School Meals for All in Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Wilson
Chair, Communications and Coordination Committee of the
Food System Resilience Council