



INFORMATIONAL TESTIMONY ON HB 183

Human Services – Food Supplement Program (Summer SNAP for Children Act)

House Appropriations Committee

January 23, 2024

HB 183 aims to provide additional state funding and implementation flexibilities to the Summer SNAP for Children program, which provides state-funded supplemental SNAP benefits in the amount of \$30 per school-age child per month in June, July, and August, and \$10 per school-age child in December when schools are not in session and school meals are not available.

As a statewide, non-partisan, nonprofit working to end hunger in Maryland, Maryland Hunger Solutions strives to overcome existing barriers to state and federal nutrition assistance programs and create self-sustaining connections between Maryland residents and nutritious foods.

Among these nutrition programs, the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program play the most critical role as the nation's first line of defense against childhood food insecurity. However, during the summer months and other long breaks, kids lose access to these critical nutrition programs that they rely on while they are in school. During the 2022-2023 school year, over half, or approximately 485,000 Maryland students were enrolled to receive free school meals. Of these students, almost 200,000 were directly certified to receive free school meals because of their participation in SNAP. These students are the most at risk of feeling the negative health effects of inadequate nutrition during school breaks when their families might struggle to fill the gaps left by the absence of school meals.

The state-funded Summer SNAP program was modeled after the federal Summer EBT demonstration project, which was later expanded and made permanent starting in 2024. We know these programs work to help fill the nutrition gap children experience when school is out because [research has shown that the Summer EBT demonstration project successfully reduced food insecurity and improved childhood nutrition](#) in the households that received these additional summer benefits.

With the expansion of the federal Summer EBT program, more states, including Maryland, will be able to participate starting in summer 2024. As state agencies work together to begin implementation of Summer EBT, we encourage thoughtful integration of Summer SNAP and Summer EBT so that these programs can effectively and efficiently run together to provide needed support to Maryland families during the summer months.

Maryland Hunger Solutions appreciates the opportunity to inform the conversation around HB 183. We welcome the opportunity to work with legislators, the Department of Human Services, and Maryland State Department of Education to ensure that Maryland children have reliable access to healthy food year-round and can return to school healthy, nourished, and ready to learn.