



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

SB 0461 SNAP HEAT AND EAT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

TO: Maryland General Assembly Finance Committee

FROM: Susan Allen, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)
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DATE: Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Dear Chair Beidle, Co-Chair Hayes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee

Recommended Amendment: These restrictions on SNAP Heat and Eat Program Eligibility are required by 2025 Federal policy changes authorized in the Congressional Budget and Reconciliation Bill HR1.

The Heat and Eat Program has effectively provided assistance to thousands of Marylanders yearly since Delegate Charkoudian (District 20) and Senator McCray (District 45) introduced legislation for this program during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. MEPPN strongly supports the additional assistance for food costs and utility bills that Heat and Eat provides to our most struggling neighbors.

MEPPN understands that 2025 Federal policy changes require states to limit Heat and Eat Eligibility to families with elderly and/or disabled members. These families are, of course, highly deserving and should receive priority. There are, however, other high priority Marylanders like families with young children who also could receive priority.

As common practice, when cuts to social safety net programs are mandated by the Federal government, **we believe MD amending legislation should clearly indicate that these eligibility restrictions are the result of Congressional or Executive action—not the actions of our Maryland officials.**

The amendment we recommend will document for voters how policy changes in the Heat and Eat safety net program have been made. **This amendment will establish accountability.**

MEPPN urges a FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS vote on SB O461 SNAP Heat and Eat Eligibility bill.

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