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**HB 559**

February 18, 2020

**TO:** Members of the House Appropriations Committee

**FROM:** Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

**RE:** House Bill 559 – Protecting SNAP/Temporary Cash Assistance Funding

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 559.

In Maryland, one in nine (652,000) individuals face food insecurity each year.<sup>1</sup> Food insecurity is a condition in which a household lacks consistent access to adequate food for all members to lead an active and healthy life due to economic constraints.<sup>2</sup> Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are two main resources that families utilize to navigate these strenuous periods.

A robust body of evidence shows that SNAP and TANF decrease food insecurity.<sup>3,4</sup> Households that remain on SNAP have a 28% reduction in the odds of very low food insecurity compared with similar households that leave the program.<sup>5</sup> Improvements in food insecurity are vital to individual and public health due to significant associations between food insecurity and chronic diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes.<sup>6</sup> Among low-income, food-insecure

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<sup>1</sup> Feeding America. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2017/overall/maryland>

<sup>2</sup> Coleman-Jensen, Gregory, Singh. Household Food Security in the United States in 2018. US Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service; 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Moffitt, Ribar. Rasch Analyses of Very Low Food Security Among Households and Children in the Three City Study. *South Econ J.* 2016 April; 82(4) 1123—1146.

<sup>4</sup> Nord M. How much does the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program alleviate food insecurity? Evidence from recent programme leavers. *Public Health Nutr.* 2012 May;15(5):811-7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Seligman HK, Laraia BA, Kushel MB. Food insecurity is associated with chronic disease among low-income NHANES participants. *J Nutr.* 2010;140(2): 304-310.

people with type 2 diabetes, participation in SNAP is associated with a 63% reduction in the odds of having poor control of blood sugars.<sup>7</sup>

SNAP is also associated with direct health improvements that generate significant health care savings. On average, SNAP participation leads to three fewer days in bed due to illness per year.<sup>8</sup> On a population level, this benefit is enormous. In addition, among American adults on Medicaid, SNAP participation is associated with a \$2,544 decrease in yearly health care expenditures per participant.<sup>9</sup>

Ensuring that Maryland families have sufficient funding to purchase food and survive during their most trying times is necessary for the wellbeing of the state. This bill will save lives and is the fiscally responsible option.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 452.

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<sup>7</sup> Mayer VL, McDonough K, Seligman H, Mitra N, Long JA. Food insecurity, coping strategies and glucose control in low-income patients with diabetes. *Public Health Nutr.* 2016 Apr;19(6):1103-11.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory C. Does SNAP improve your health? *Food Policy.* 2015 Jan; 50:11-19.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2014.09.010> . Epub 2014 Nov 11.

<sup>9</sup> Berkowitz SA, Seligman HK, Rigdon J, Meigs JB, Basu S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation and Health Care Expenditures Among Low-Income Adults. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2017 Nov 1;177(11):1642-1649. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2017.4841.