



Student Affairs
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001

Members of the Appropriation Committee,

Over the past seven years, I have served as a case manager at both the Community College of Baltimore County and Towson University. In this role, I navigate students through difficult situations that would otherwise impact their education. These difficulties include everything from mental health and bereavement to homelessness and financial literacy. In my professional opinion, food insecurity is one of the most prevalent yet overlooked issues facing this generation of students. For many, it is hard to believe that someone who can afford to go to college can't afford to eat, and that is why HB-1175 and the awareness that it brings to this issue is so crucial.

Unfortunately, for many students in pursuit of higher education food expenditures often suffer when considering a monthly budget. At a minimum, the cost of attending college includes the price of tuition and books but for many students, especially those who support themselves, there are other expenses such as housing, transportation, and medical costs. At the end of the month when all those bills are due, I often speak with students who have skipped several meals so they could pay their rent.

I personally support of HB-1175 because it brings awareness to a rapidly growing issue. Even if the most conservative estimates are true, 1 in 5 college students experience food insecurity. The proposed bill would not only offer monetary support to those of us combating the issue but also create a state recognized baseline for success. While it is my hope that many institutions will aim to exceed that baseline, the recognition and awareness offered by this bill would be a monumental step forward in our efforts.

Finally, I endorse HB-1175 because food insecurity is one of the few issues that does not discriminate based on age, race, or sex. If passed, this bill would directly benefit many of the students that I have had the privilege of serving. It would help the mother who went back to school so she could provide more for her family. It would support the first generation student who worked two jobs during the day so they could attend nursing school at night. It would even support the student who earned a scholarship to a nationally ranked program, but struggled to afford regular and nutritious meals. In short, supporting this bill means supporting the people who are working hard to improve their future and the future of everyone living in Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable report on HB-1175,

Adam Melfa