



Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee
HB 1175: Higher Education - Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program - Established
Position: Favorable

Monday, March. 2, 2020

House Appropriations Committee
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 2140

Honorable Chair Maggie McIntosh, Vice Chair Michael Jackson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Jordy Diaz and I am a sophomore and the current Director of Legislative Affairs for the Towson University Student Government Association. On behalf of the students of Towson, we would like to thank Delegate Davis and all other sponsors for putting forward the Hunger-Free Campus Act to address food insecurity on college campuses.

Towson University believes that this bill is crucial in ensuring that all Maryland higher education students have access to food. This bill would help by placing food insecurity in the forefront of issues affecting our students today. Currently Towson University has a program that gives students food insecurity points but this program is very limited due to funding. These food insecurity points are awarded to students with need but only one semester out of an academic year at a time. This means that a student that applies and is awarded them in the fall will have to go hungry in the spring semester. Meal Swaps are another program that is also in place at Towson while some students have meal plans that reset every week, they can still choose to donate up to two meals (the equivalent of \$6 each) per week. This program benefits many Towson University students and would also be implemented on other campuses if this bill passes.

HB 1175 would ensure that Universities in Maryland would have the funding and ability to extend these programs that give support to students that are struggling to get their next meal. The distraction and worry of going hungry effectively damages a students focus and ability to thrive in any setting, we should not allow our future teachers, lawyers, engineers, or any other vital participants in our communities to suffer in this way. For all these reasons and more, we support HB1175 and urge a favorable report.



Best, Jordy Diaz

Director of Legislative Affairs



https://www.towson.edu/ir/documents/dash_2018.pdf

February 22, 2020

Dear Chair Maggie McIntosh and Vice Chair Michael Jackson:

My name is Doron Tadmor and I am the current Vice President of Student Affairs of the University of Maryland Student Government Association. On behalf of the Student Government Association, we would like to thank Delegate Davis for putting forward the Hunger-Free



Campus Act to address food insecurity on college campuses.

Food insecurity has been an issue increasingly important to the student body. In Fall 2017, a study was conducted by the University of Maryland Counseling Center Research Unit in partnership with the Department of Dining Services, University Health Center, and Maryland Parent and Family Association, to determine whether graduate and undergraduate students were food insecure. The survey showed that 20% of students had low food security or very low food security. The study also found that students who reported they were food insecure were likely to report a number of other challenges such as poorer physical health, lower self-esteem, higher levels of distress, anxiety, depression, anger, and loneliness, compared to their counterparts. Food insecure students also reported a number of negative impacts of food insecurity on their academic experiences and performance – not being able to concentrate in class, failing an assignment or exam, missing a class, failing or withdrawing from a class, and planning to withdraw from the University.

After the publication of the study, I worked with the SGA to create the Emergency Meal Fund. The Emergency Meal Fund is an SGA-funded program formed to address food insecurity on the University of Maryland's campus by providing over 1,660 meals to students who have very low food insecurity. This program has been extremely successful, however, SGA's funds for this program are nearly depleted, and we have yet to find sustainable funding. In a similar vein, the Campus Pantry, which has operated since 2014, has worked to alleviate food insecurity by providing food for students. This program is also very popular, but they do not have sufficient funding to provide services to as many students as possible, and thus are restricted in what they are able to accomplish.

The Hunger-Free Campus Act would allow our university to access grant money that is crucial in sustaining and developing the programs we offer. At a minimum, the grant would allow the Emergency Meal Fund and Campus Pantry to continue providing their current level of assistance for our students, faculty, and staff. However, I imagine that this grant would allow these programs to expand and blossom across campus to be able to help more students to ensure that we can make the University of Maryland a Hunger-Free campus.

The policies laid out in The Hunger Free Campus Act have the potential to help thousands of



students on our campus get access to needed resources. As a representative of the University of Maryland Student Government Association, I ask that you vote yes on HB1175.

Sincerely,

Doron Tadmor Vice President of Student
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