



March 10, 2020

**2020 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
HB1532: Protect Against Hunger Act**

BILL: HB1532: Human Services – Food Supplement Program – Eligibility
COMMITTEE: House Appropriations Committee
POSITION: Testimony of Support of House Bill 1532
BILL ANALYSIS: Establishing that the criteria for determining eligibility for the food supplement program in the Department of Human Services are the criteria in effect on a certain date, notwithstanding certain changes in federal law; requiring the State to provide certain food supplement program benefits for which federal funding is not available; and generally relating to the food supplement program.

Dear Chair McIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill as it seeks to protect food access and food supplement program eligibility for food-insecure Maryland residents and families, despite any potential changes in federal law that could impact benefits access for these individuals.

Economists at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimate that each dollar that households redeem through the SNAP program expands the economy by \$1.70, provides important support for small businesses, and even increases non-food purchases. Therefore, upholding access to food supplement program benefits through State law will effectively enhance the economic and food security of our communities.

Recent legislation at the federal level has generated fear and confusion among residents concerning their participation in benefits programs upon which they rely, which their tax dollars help to support, and most importantly, for which they are legally eligible. It is critical that Maryland passes this bill to protect Marylanders against the potentially negative impacts of federal legislation that could increase food insecurity rates, state- and nation-wide. For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports and urges you to vote **FOR** this bill.

The Montgomery County Food Council is an independent council formed and led by individual community members and representatives of local businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Our mission is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system. Our vision is to cultivate a vibrant food system in Montgomery County that consciously produces, distributes, and recycles food, making it accessible to all residents while promoting the health of the local food economy, its consumers, and the environment.

For more information, please contact: Heather Bruskin, MCFC Executive Director at the email and phone number below.

