



BILL: HB1532: Human Services – Food Supplement Program – Eligibility
TESTIMONY BY: Jackie DeCarlo, CEO, Manna Food Center
POSITION: Testimony in Support of House Bill 1532

Good afternoon, Chair McIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee. A special greeting to Delegate Jared Solomon, whose leadership informs the work of Manna’s Advocacy Task Force. My name is Jackie DeCarlo, and I am proud to represent Manna Food Center and the more than 34,000 residents we serve annually in Montgomery County. As the County’s designated food bank, Manna strives to eliminate hunger through our mission of sharing food, offering nutrition education, and advocating with the community for policies that strengthen efforts to achieve “Food for All.” It is an honor to amplify the testimony of neighbors, such as Ms. Umana, to support House Bill 1532 on behalf of Marylanders across the state.

You may be surprised by the range of individuals who receive food support from Manna: More than 40% of our participants are considered “working poor” because, while they are employed, they do not earn enough money to make ends meet. Another 30% of our participants are seniors, aging into poverty as they often cope with increasing medical expenses and inadequate retirement resources. Manna knows from experience that as important as the healthy food we and other agencies provide is, it cannot replace FSP (also known as SNAP) or fill the gap if FSP benefits are reduced. Almost 2,300 of the households we serve currently receive SNAP benefits, and of those, 54% are families with children.

The recent federal policy proposals, which are designed to limit federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, will impede our progress against hunger for people such as:

- A participant I’ll call Cynthia who shared with my team that the \$22.00 she receives from FSP/SNAP “... is not much, but should they take that away, I won’t have those \$22.00 for gas to get to work. It is really stressful to think about it.”
- A 52 year old woman I’ll refer to as “Susan” explained that due to health concerns, a large portion of her budget goes to prescription drugs. She extends her food budget with FSP/SNAP to purchase milk, butter, and breakfast items.
- Single senior “Amy” at age 68 finds that “The amount of food stamps I now receive lasts 7 days only. Food costs are much higher. I only purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and maybe rice [and I] can’t afford any meats....Portions are getting smaller and smaller because less money is available to get food.”

The human toll that will be taken if we do not maintain current level of eligibility for SNAP is clear. Hunger and hardship will increase. It also must be said that less FSP/SNAP support for Marylanders translates into more demand for Manna services. Although we are quite capable of expanding in response to spikes in need—such as during last year’s federal government shutdown—our resources should be mobilized to maintain and build on progress made, not fill the gaps that threaten to take us backward in our fight for self-sufficiency. Please vote for HR 1532 to prevent an increase in food insecurity rates, state- and nation-wide.

12301 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 ~ 301.424.1130 ~ www.mannafood.org