



Welfare Advocates

Founded 1979

228 W. Lexington Street — Suite 220 • Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3432

Phone: 410.261.5874 • Fax: 410.889.0203

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 49
Department of Human Services – Food Supplement Program – Renaming**

**Senate Finance Committee
January 9, 2020**

Welfare Advocates is a statewide coalition of community-based organizations, advocacy groups, faith communities, and consumers, whose mission it is to educate ourselves, and the wider community and to advocate for an adequate safety net and public policies that support families moving towards economic stability.

Welfare Advocates supports SB 49, which renames the Food Supplement Program (FSP) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

FSP is a vital safety-net program in Maryland. It provides a supplement to Marylanders living in or near poverty to purchase food for themselves and their families. Generally, an individual or family must have an income under 130% of the federal poverty level to qualify for the program. For an individual, 130% of poverty is \$16,237 annually.¹ FSP is designed to be a supplement to an individual's own contribution toward food costs. The funds are distributed monthly through electronic benefit cards, and only food can be purchased using FSP funds.

Changing FSP to SNAP aligns the program's name with the same name the federal government uses, which simplifies state and local outreach efforts. Matching Maryland's terminology to the federal terminology would alleviate confusion, streamline programmatic outreach materials, and provide clarity for Marylanders.

For the reasons stated above, Welfare Advocates respectfully urges a favorable report on SB 49.

Submitted by Lisa Klingenmaier, Chair

¹ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. (2019). Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>
