

MarylandersAgainstProverty_FAV_SB49

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Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 49

Department of Human Services – Food Supplement Program - Renaming

Senate Finance Committee

January 9, 2020

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Matt Quinlan, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
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Maryland Community Action
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Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
Public Justice Center
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Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) supports SB 49, which renames the Food Supplement Program (FSP) in the Department of Human Services to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Food Supplement Program (known nationally as SNAP, and formerly as Food Stamps) is a critical safety-net program that reduces food insecurity for low-income Marylanders. Statewide, over 625,000 Marylanders utilize FSP to purchase food and make ends meet.¹

Renaming the Food Supplement Program to reflect the terminology used at the federal level will alleviate discrepancies and confusion. Streamlining the name of FSP to SNAP will assist with vital outreach efforts, as it simplifies materials and descriptions of the program. Passing SB 49 will reduce the need for multiple names referring to a single program in the Department of Human Services and amongst service providers.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges a favorable report for support SB 49.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.

¹ Department of Human Services (2019). *Food Supplement Program: Cases, participants, & issuances* [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/Data%20and%20Reports/FIA/Statistical%20Reports/2019-All-Prg-MoStat-Public-Web-w-Charts-FINAL-11.pdf>

DHS_FAV_SB49

Uploaded by: Kibret, Netsanet

Position: FAV

DATE: January 9, 2020

BILL NUMBER: SB49

COMMITTEE: Finance

BILL TITLE: Department of Human Services – Food Supplement Program -Renaming

DHS POSITION: Support

PRESENTED BY: Netsanet Kibret, Executive Director
Family Investment Administration
Department of Human Services

Good afternoon Madam Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and members of the Finance Committee for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 49.

My name is Netsanet Kibret and I am the Executive Director of the Family Investment Administration, within the Department of Human Services.

SB 49 is a Departmental Bill that would rename the Food Supplement Program to be the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The purpose of the bill is to align the State's program name with the federal program name.

By way of historical context, in the summer of 2008, the U.S. Congress passed the Food, Conservation and Energy Act (also known as the Farm Bill) mandating a new national name for what was then known as the Food Stamp Program. The Farm Bill renamed the FSP as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or "SNAP". The stated three main objectives of the new name were:

1. A focus on nutrition. The program helps low-income people consume a more nutritious diet by supplementing their food budget.
2. A reflection of a more modern program. There are no more program stamps or coupons. Electronic benefit transfer is the sole means of benefit issuance.
3. A reduction in the stigma associated with "food stamps". Historically, some customers felt embarrassed to apply for benefits or use their coupons at grocery stores. The new name helps reduce stigma by stressing the importance of nutrition. The EBT card also reduces the appearance that the user is different from any other shopper.

States were not mandated by Congress to adopt the name change. Since then, thirty-three states, including Maryland's neighbors (Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, Virginia and West Virginia) changed their state program name to SNAP. Maryland is one of 18 states that did not adopt the national program name.

The Department of Human Services now recognizes that by aligning our state food supplement program with the federal name the positive outcomes are twofold:



WelfareAdvocates_FAV_SB49

Uploaded by: Klingenmaier, Lisa

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Welfare Advocates

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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>
