



**SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**Senate Bill 767**

**Higher Education – Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program**

**March 9, 2021**

**Favorable with Amendments**

**Joann Boughman**

**Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs**

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding Senate Bill 767. The University System of Maryland believes this bill would offer great opportunities for institutions to serve the needs of its students. For years, our institutions have lived the reality that has been, again, supported by a recent study that found that, “More than 60 percent of students had experienced food insecurity within the past thirty days or housing insecurity/homelessness within the past year.” Furthermore, the survey by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice ([Linked Here](#)) noted that students who are African American, LGBTQ, former foster youth, or who have prior military service, or are listed as “independent from their parents or guardians for financial aid purposes” have a higher risk of basic needs insecurity. All USM institutions have food pantries, emergency funds, and/or other programs to help students meet their most basic need while they are matriculating at our institutions. The program and grant outlined in SB 767 would help enhance the institutions’ efforts.

USM offers a few points for consideration:

- Regional Higher Education Centers (RHEC) should be included in the bill and/or institutions that receive the hunger-free designation should have to ensure resource access is equitable among all of their students, many of who are studying at a RHEC.
- Institutions should have access to the report and data generated, as it will improve the degree to which institutions can meet students’ needs.
- Some colleges and universities do not have dining halls. Therefore, the section(s) referring to dining halls and meal plans should indicate “if applicable”.
- We wonder if the bill only intends to apply to students in Maryland, as some institutions, significantly, UMGC, have students abroad.

Food insecurity is a predictor of persistence and retention and should be a concern for Universities, especially those serving large numbers of students in higher-risk populations. Being able to meet those students’ needs will help increase their opportunities for success at our institutions and beyond.

Thank you for allowing the USM to share our Favorable with Amendments position on Senate Bill 767.



## **About the University System of Maryland**

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of 12 institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards 8 out of every 10 bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of 21 members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.