



Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 831 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Hearing Date: February 17, 2021

Position: Support with Amendments

Moveable Feast supports *House Bill 831 - Maryland Food System Resiliency Council* and requests an amendment to include additional expertise. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of our food system. Since mid-March 2020, numerous surveys have documented unprecedented levels of food insecurity that eclipse anything seen in recent decades in the United States, including during the Great Recession. Food System Resiliency is an effort to make sure that another pandemic, the impact of climate change, or other crisis does not put in jeopardy people's access to adequate food.

This legislation creates a council not just made up of representatives from the agricultural sector, but also the public health sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a public health and economic crisis. One of the goals for the proposed council is to address and eliminate diet-related public health disparities. Part of Moveable Feast's mission is to prepare and deliver medically tailored meals and groceries to people living with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other life-threatening illnesses. The concept of Food is Medicine which we strongly support, is to advance public policy that supports access to food and nutrition services for people with severe and/or chronic illnesses. This concept should be integrated into the work of this Food System Resiliency Council.

We therefore ask for an amendment to add expertise in this area:

On page 3, after line 23, insert:

"ONE EXPERT ON MEDICALLY TAILORED MEALS FOR PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS; AND

Our clients, who are living with serious chronic diseases, are impacted by inequities created by institutional racism. This includes the disparities related to access to food, housing, and health care. Ensuring that the State creates a food system that assures access during a crisis to nutritious food, not just any food, must be part of an equitable system.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote with this amendment. If we can provide any further information, please contact Ann Ciekot at aciekot@policypartners.net or 410-207-3189.

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Moveable Feast is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization, contributions to which are tax-deductible. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting our accounting office. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.