



**Senate Bill 365
Proponent Testimony**

Gary Dougherty
Director, State Government Affairs
American Diabetes Association®
House Environment and Transportation Committee
April 1, 2021

Chairman Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is Gary Dougherty and I am the Director of State Government Affairs for the American Diabetes Association® (ADA). Unfortunately, I am unable to join you this afternoon; therefore, on behalf of the more than 2.2 million Marylanders with or at risk for diabetes, I am submitting written testimony in support of Senate Bill 365

The Neighborhood Business Development Program already offers financial incentives to help create small businesses that provide fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods to residents in food deserts. SB 365 expands the purpose of the Program to also provide financing to help retain such enterprises and increases the maximum amount of small loans available to qualified businesses from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

According to Feeding America's annual report¹ on local food insecurity, Maryland ranks 17th among the states with a 11.0% food insecurity rate. This represents the percentage of the population that experienced limited or uncertain access to adequate food at some point during the year.

Not surprisingly, the COVID-19 health emergency has exacerbated the problem. Research shows that food insecurity has doubled overall, and tripled among households with children.²

These people have limited access to nutritious foods - like that available at full-service grocery stores, farmers markets, or smaller retailers. Individuals and families living in these areas are often left without the ability or the means to purchase nutritious foods to prepare healthy meals, due to factors such as lack of transportation and high prices.

¹ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>

² Schanzenbach, D. W., & A. Pitts. (2020). How much has food insecurity risen? Evidence from the Census Household Pulse Survey. Institute for Policy Research Rapid Research Report.
<https://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/documents/reports/ipr-rapid-researchreports-pulse-hh-data-10-june-2020.pdf>

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As you know, a healthy diet can help decrease risk for obesity and chronic diseases like diabetes. According to the ADA's Statement on Socioecological Determinants of Diabetes and Prediabetes, those with severe food insecurity have an approximately twofold risk of diabetes compared with those without food insecurity.³

By providing financial assistance through the Neighborhood Business Development Program to help businesses increase access to fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy and nutritious foods, more Marylanders can take advantage of a healthy diet and decrease their risk for diabetes.

To allow more Marylanders to benefit from access to fresh and healthy foods and experience better health outcomes as a result, the American Diabetes Association® urges your support for SB 365.

Thank you very much for your attention. If you have any questions, please direct them to me at gdougherty@diabetes.org and I will do my best to answer them for you.

³ <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/diacare/36/8/2430.full.pdf>

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