

March 8, 2022

Committees: Appropriations

Testimony on: HB1027 – Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students)

Position: Favorable

RE: Testimony in support of HB1027 - SNAP for Students

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and the members of the Appropriations Committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Caroline Thorne and I am a student at the University of Maryland, College Park. In school, I study Government and Politics and Environmental Studies. As such, I have learned the immense importance of effective policy in our society today, particularly in environmental related areas. In my studies, I have had the opportunity to work specifically on food policy as an intern at many fantastic organizations, including Montgomery County's Food Council, and the Embassy of Spain's Office of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. One of my tasks at the Food Council was to contact Food Assistance Providers in Montgomery County. I worked on this project over the summer of 2020 while the COVID-19 pandemic was well underway. Food insecurity has increased immensely since the onset of the pandemic. I called hundreds of providers in the Montgomery County area and was met with the same stories. Food pantries having a severe uptick in customers towards the end of the month due to SNAP benefits running out. Coming to school, I expected trends to change, and found the opposite. Countless college students suffer from food insecurity, and the numbers are rising daily.

As the appropriations committee, you are being presented with an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of countless students impacted by food insecurity. Students in college shouldn't have to worry about where their next meal will come from, they should be focused on classes, discovering what career they want to pursue, and becoming future leaders in our communities. This bill is a return on investment for Maryland's financing of State Colleges and Universities, as it allows for students to fully focus on their education, and become active participants in Maryland's economy after graduation. Food insecurity holds students back from being great, and you have the opportunity to change that.

The University of Maryland, Student Government Association supports HB1027. This bill will:

- Places necessary emphasis on the rising struggle of food insecurity among college students.
- Recognizes the role of necessary physical health for students.
- Opens eligibility for SNAP benefits for students of personal or family income of \$0.00

We request a favorable vote on HB1027.

Sincerely,

Caroline Thorne

Deputy Director of Civic Engagement, Behavioral and Social Sciences Representative

Student Government Association

University of Maryland – College Park