

March 8, 2022

Committees: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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 provide testimony on this imperative piece of legislation.

My name is Lily-Max Cooke and I currently serve as the Director of Government Affairs within the University of Maryland's Student Government Association (SGA). On behalf of our student body, I am urging a favorable vote on HB1027.

Food insecurity is a devastating real concern among all demographics, particularly those facing housing insecurity and low-income financial circumstances. Attending an institute of higher education opens plenty of open doors for many, yet for others the costs that occur when being a full-time or part-time student can place grave financial stressors on the mental and physical health of the individual. This is even more true for those students who enter a college or university with pre-existing difficult circumstances.

HB1027 opens the door for SNAP benefits for eligible students. It is no secret that on-campus food pantries historically face low-donations, and this reality has been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With schools gradually opening at full capacity, with in-person instruction, the need for secure basic needs among those who need it most have never been greater. The supply chain crisis is yet another obstacle, leading to national increases in consumer prices, particularly in grocery stores. It is imperative that eligible students are able to receive the support they need from SNAP. Academic and personal success is reliant on a healthy mind and physicality, without such students cannot properly learn in their academic environments.

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,

Lily-Max Cooke

Director of Government Affairs

Student Government Association

University of Maryland – College Park