



Welfare Advocates

Founded 1979

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House Bill 456 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement

House Appropriations Committee
February 8, 2022

Support

Welfare Advocates is a statewide coalition of social service organizations, advocacy groups, faith communities, and community members, whose mission it is to educate ourselves, and the wider community and to advocate for an adequate safety net and public policies that support families moving towards economic stability.

Welfare Advocates supports HB 456, which reduces the minimum age for the State SNAP Supplemental from 62 to 60, as well as raises the minimum monthly benefit from \$30/month to \$45/month.

SNAP is a critical safety-net program that reduces food insecurity for low-income Marylanders. Statewide, over 860,000 Maryland children, families, and seniors utilize SNAP to purchase healthy food and maintain adequate nutrition. While SNAP benefits are an essential part of the safety-net, many older adults live on fixed incomes and still continue to struggle to meet their basic needs even with SNAP. Nearly one in five low-income seniors in Maryland struggles with hunger, resulting in Maryland having the 8th highest food insecurity rate among low-income seniors.ⁱ Thus, any increase that can be made in the SNAP benefit amount for low-income older adults will reduce food insecurity and combat hunger among this vulnerable population.

HB 456 is a smart investment in the wellbeing of low-income Marylanders seniors - and in the local economy. SNAP recipients spend their benefits on food in neighborhood grocery stores, farmers markets, and other local retailers. For every \$5 spent in SNAP, \$9 is generated in local economic activity, yielding a strong return on investment. Increasing the SNAP minimum benefit – and decreasing the age so more seniors are eligible – will increase the economic security of older adults as they work to rebuild their lives in the wake of the pandemic and amidst historic inflation.

WA appreciates your consideration, and respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 456.

Submitted by Lisa Kligenmaier, *Chair of Welfare Advocates*

ⁱ Maryland Hunger Solutions. 2019. Senior Hunger in Maryland.
http://mdhungersolutions.org/pdf/Senior_hunger_fact_sheet_OFFICIAL.pdf
