

March 07, 2022

Sadai Menjivar Student at UMBC
3201 Weeping Willow Ct, Apt 32,
Silver Spring, MD, 20906

Jared Solomon
222 Lowe House Office Building
6 Bladen Street,
Annapolis, MD, 21401

Dear Delegate Solomon:

As a constituent and a psychology student at UMBC, I am all about advocating and helping others. As a student in school and as an intern at Identity, I feel a special responsibility to advocate for families and students to receive resources and assistance that have helped me.

First, thank you for sponsoring the *Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students)* Bill, HB 1027, which would require the Department of Human Services to provide food benefits to certain students of higher education. I hope you and your colleagues on the House Appropriations Committee and in the General Assembly approve this effort to help students have food on their tables and the nutrition they need and deserve while pursuing their education.

As a first-generation Latina student, I am currently in my last semester for my bachelor's degree in Psychology. I have worked very hard to fulfill my parents' dream of graduating and having a profession that I love. My parents are from El Salvador and Guatemala, and they came here when they were adolescents. My father works as a landscaper and my mother worked as a babysitter. They told me their story of what it meant to become an adult and the challenges they faced. They would express how they weren't able to continue their education because they had to work to survive. Growing up, I would always refer to myself as my family's translator, bookkeeper, and advocate. I say this because I played multiple roles to help my family get by. I remember as a child, I would remind my teachers I needed to leave class early to go downstairs to receive a bag of food from the school's family food drive. From that day I always knew that I would one day provide for them.

However, during the outbreak of Covid-19, many families have been struggling to receive aid and pay their expenses on time. Unfortunately, my family has had an extremely hard time financially. I had to take the initiative and fill out the application for SNAP because my father couldn't work due to the home isolation order during the peak of Covid-19. Later, he was let go due to an outbreak at his job. Luckily, we were approved to receive SNAP but not knowing if we would be approved or not was terrifying. I was terrified not knowing where our next meal would come from, and not knowing how we would get by. College is already stressful as a part time or full-time student. Most colleges consider students as full-time if they are taking 15 to 20 credits a semester. Not only are we asked to attend school, work, and attend to our family matters but now we must worry if our benefits will still be applicable after June 1, 2022? We should not have to

worry about how we are going to be feeding our families and whether we are applicable to receive aid.

Therefore, I encourage you to make the *Food Supplement Benefits- Students- Eligibility (SNAP for Students)* bill permanent. Because of this, you will be helping and improving many students in their health and in their long-term ability to make a living wage or better. Access to food and to education are key to a healthy and bright future. Thank you for supporting ways that we do not have to choose between an education and a job so that we have food. Please feel free to reach out if you have any further questions on the importance of this bill. I look forward to a positive outcome for our families and students.

Sincerely,

Sadai Menjivar