

HB 456_Maryland Food Bank_FAV.pdf

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Position: FAV

March 29, 2022

HB 456

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support

House Bill 456 increases the amount of the supplemental state food assistance benefit for older adults from \$30 to \$45 and lowers the age of eligibility for this supplemental benefit from 62 to 60.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that two million Marylanders may be at risk of food insecurity. A person who is food insecure does not have consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day, and this problem persists in every area of the state. There are also communities and populations who are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, such as older adults. The causes of food insecurity for older adults are complex and often include underlying factors such as increased healthcare needs, low income, and a lack of reliable transportation and other mobility concerns.

The Maryland Food Bank knows that demand for food assistance among the older adult population has been high for many years and been especially heightened during the pandemic. In late 2021, the Maryland Food Bank conducted a poll on food insecurity throughout our service area and found that 55% of Marylanders 65 and older worry about their household's financial situation, and almost 1 in 9 worry about money every day. Tangibly, in the past seven months, for example, orders for our tailored Older Adult Back Up Box (BUB) – a 15 pound pre-packaged box of shelf-stable food – constituted 21% of all of our BUB orders, the most only behind our standard Healthy BUB. 42% of visits to our partners who currently track demographic data, such as local food pantries, were of those 60 years and older. Inquiries into home delivery options are also more frequent.

HB 456 will undoubtedly directly benefit food insecure older adults across Maryland. As a recognized SNAP outreach partner with the state, we understand the struggle that older adults have and will continue to face with their SNAP benefits. Once the maximum benefit allotment for household size ends, older adults could see their benefits shrink to as little as \$30 a month, often from as high as \$250 a month – a significant decrease. SNAP applications for older adults 60 years and older comprise between about 20% and 35% of all applications we assist with, and we anticipate applications will continue on the higher end once our outreach efforts are able to resume in person at low-income senior buildings. It's clear that older adults in particular need further assistance from the state, and now is the time to strengthen the food assistance benefits that they are eligible for. Providing additional support for older adults to purchase food helps sustain their life in other ways, including enabling them to cover other household expenses and supplementing their specific nutritional needs.

The Maryland Food Bank appreciates your consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 456.

HB 456_PJC_Support FIN.pdf

Uploaded by: Ashley Black

Position: FAV



Ashley Black, Staff Attorney
Public Justice Center
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-625-9409, ext. 224
blacka@publicjustice.org

HB 456
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement
Hearing of the Senate Finance Committee
March 29, 2022
1:00 PM

SUPPORT

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Health Rights Project supports policies and practices that promote the overall health of Marylanders struggling to make ends meet, with the explicit goal of eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes. **PJC strongly supports HB 456**, which would increase the minimum State-provided supplemental benefit under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program from \$30 to \$40.

SNAP is important to helping low-income older adults in attaining food security and is associated with improved health outcomes. A recent research study of over 60,000 low-income seniors in Maryland found that seniors participating in SNAP are less likely to be admitted to nursing homes and hospitals compared to their low-income non-participating counterparts, resulting in reduced healthcare costs.¹ As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and declaration of a federal public health emergency, SNAP participants receive the maximum allotment for their household. For a household of one older adult, this is \$250 a month, including the emergency allotments. However, once the emergency allotments end, households could see their benefit decrease to \$30 a month and it is anticipated that this change would impact many older adults as they may have other income sources such as Social Security. With rising food costs, older adults would likely struggle to make ends meet. By raising the minimum benefit from \$30 to \$40, HB 456 is a proactive measure to ease the transition from emergency allotments for older adults.

For these reasons, the Public Justice Center urges the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for **HB 456**. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Ashley Black at 410-625-9409 x 224 or blacka@publicjustice.org.

¹ Steven Carlson & Brynne Keith-Jennings, *SNAP Is Linked with Improved Nutritional Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs* (2018), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-is-linked-with-improved-nutritional-outcomes-and-lower-health-care>.

HB 456 SNAP Final - JD Edits.pdf

Uploaded by: James Campbell

Position: FAV



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

**HB 456 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-
State Supplement
Senate Finance Committee
Favorable
March 29, 2022**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kelly and members of the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 456 by Delegates Valentino-Smith and Ruth.

My name is Jim Campbell, a former member of the House of Delegates and now State President of AARP Maryland. AARP is one of the largest membership-based organizations in Maryland, encompassing more than 850,000 members.

AARP is a non-partisan, non-profit nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthen communities and advocate on those issues that most matter to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

We are pleased to support House Bill 456. The bill increases the increase the monthly supplemental benefit from 30 to \$40 a month. This change will provide a more livable benefit to some of our most vulnerable residents.

SNAP serves one in seven U.S. residents and helps to ensure that low-income households have access to adequate food and do not go hungry. Almost 870,000 Marylanders receive SNAP benefits, and 90,000 the recipients are ages 60 or older.

A recent study by the Food and Research Action Center reported that Maryland has the 8th highest food insecurity rate in the nation among the 60+ population and the 7th highest among those 50-59. The SNAP program has been shown to be effective in reducing food insecurity among older adults who have limited resources to spend on necessities such as food, housing, medical costs, and utilities. Researchers have found that participation in SNAP by older Americans, who are less likely to have to choose between food and other essentials, have a better chance of living independently, less likely to be hospitalized and less likely to enter a nursing home. It is estimated that taxpayers can save millions in healthcare expenditures by continuing to support programs like SNAP for older adults.

For these reasons, AARP Maryland supports HB 456 and respectfully asks the Senate Finance Committee to vote favorable. For questions please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org

MD Hunger Solutions_HB456_Supplemental Nutrition A

Uploaded by: JD Robinson

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of HB 456
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement
Senate Finance Committee
March 29, 2022

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee. It is my honor to have the opportunity to testify before you today on behalf of Maryland Hunger Solutions, a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit working to end hunger in the state of Maryland. We work with partners, state agencies, schools and school districts, local community organizations, advocates and activists to improve systems, to utilize local, state and federal programs and to ensure the most possible effective use of systems to address hunger. I am here to testify in support of HB 456.

Maryland Hunger Solutions urges your support of HB456, which requires the state to provide a supplemental benefit for any adult aged 60 and older who receives less than \$45 a month through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as SNAP and formerly known as food stamps) to a minimum monthly benefit of \$45 a month. In 2015, this Committee led the way by enacting legislation for the first time in Maryland history for a supplemental SNAP benefit. You showed a commitment to helping Maryland's older adults by increasing the minimum SNAP benefit to \$30 a month – instead of the federal \$16 a month. With the rising costs of food, the coming benefit cliff, and the continued burden of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's timely for the state to make an investment in these vulnerable Marylanders.

Maryland Hunger Solutions has conducted SNAP outreach to all Marylanders interested in learning more about SNAP and applying for the program for more than a decade. Prior to the pandemic, much of our outreach focused on assisting older adults with the application process either in-person at senior residences or over-the-phone. Sometimes they were referred by medical professionals seeking to ensure that, if eligible, they would have the nutrition that they needed. When in-person work ceased abruptly in March 2020 due to the pandemic, our main tool in performing outreach became our statewide toll-free hotline, which quickly became inundated with calls. Older adults made up a large demographic portion of our callers during the pandemic and continue to be our most common callers. The most recent data provided by the Department of Human Services shows that a record number of over 880,000 Marylanders are participating in SNAP as of December 2021, with 127,000 of them being older adults.

Since the beginning of the pandemic the cost of food has risen at an alarming rate. In fact, food price inflation has been rising at a historical rate. The United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (USDA ERS) found that average annual food-at-home prices rose 3.5% from 2019 to 2020 and rose an additional 3.5% from 2020 to 2021, both exceeding



historical averages.¹ Estimates from USDA ERS forecast an additional 1.5-2.5% rise in food-at-home costs in 2022 and are expected to again surpass historical averages.² While some of this can be attributed to supply-chain issues, the issue is clear: food costs are rising rapidly with no end in sight. Providing this increase to older adults keeps in step with the rising costs of food so they can continue to access a diet that is critical to their nutritional needs.

During the pandemic, individuals on SNAP have been able to receive the maximum allotment for their household size. However, the effects of the pandemic will be felt for years to come. In addition, the maximum benefit allotment – just like the federal public health emergency – will prove to be a temporary policy. For hundreds of thousands of Maryland families, that will mean having their SNAP benefits recalculated and decreased. For example, an older adult household of one on SNAP currently receives \$250 a month with emergency allotments, but could drop down to \$30 a month. Many of the households that will see this deduction are older adults. Older adults on SNAP often receive the minimum amount due to their benefits being calculated according to their income, expenses and household size. What can Maryland do to address this coming policy change? We can enact HB 456.

The record number of SNAP participants shows how critical this program is during the Covid-19 pandemic, and it will continue to be as the state moves through a long road to recovery. SNAP has become a more powerful means of enabling eligible participants to put food on the table by expanding food budgets. It has also proven to be an economic driver, providing approximately \$100 million dollars of benefits to the Maryland economy, to be spent at grocery stores, farmers markets, and corner stores. With the implementation of the online SNAP program in 2020, which allows SNAP users to purchase groceries via online retailers, and the Restaurant Meals Program, which allows older adults and other populations to use their benefits at restaurants, SNAP dollars are an important part of our local economy.

To be clear, this legislation cannot make up for the federal program. Only the federal government has the resources to address food insecurity on the scale that has been accomplished during the pandemic. While it is our view that the federal government should undertake comprehensive policies and fully fund SNAP, WIC and school meal programs, that is another question for another legislative body. For today, we respectfully request that this committee consider HB 456, which is a modest, targeted amendment to an existing Maryland program.

Thank you for your consideration, Maryland Hunger Solutions urges a favorable report on HB 456.

1

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/food-prices-and-spending/?topicId=1afac93a-444e-4e05-99f3-53217721a8be>

² <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook/summary-findings/>

Organizational Letter of Support_HB456_SNAP - Stat

Uploaded by: JD Robinson

Position: FAV

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to ask for your support of HB456: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement. This state supplement would increase the SNAP minimum benefit for adults 60 years and older to \$45 a month. Maryland currently provides a supplement to increase the minimum benefit to \$30 a month, but with the rapidly rising cost of food, we deem it necessary to provide another increase to support the nutrition and wellbeing of older adults in our state.

All SNAP recipients in Maryland currently receive the maximum allotment for their household size thanks to the emergency allotment waiver. However, this waiver is tied to the federal public health emergency, and once that is declared over, benefits will return to pre-pandemic levels and many older adults could see their benefits drop significantly. Increasing the minimum benefit will reduce this incoming hardship facing older adults across Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Manna Food Center

Maryland Food Bank

AARP Maryland

Capital Area Food Bank

No Kid Hungry Maryland

Fair Farms Campaign of Waterkeepers Chesapeake

Maryland Nonprofits

Prince George's County Food Equity Council

Baltimore Jewish Council

Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Association

Maryland Retailers

Montgomery County Food Council

Homeless Persons Representation Project

Healthcare for the Homeless

Marylanders Against Poverty

Public Justice Center

Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland

Critical Issues Forum

Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

HB456_MD Center on Economic Policy_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Kali Schumitz

Position: FAV

Increasing SNAP benefits would provide relief to struggling Marylanders

Position Statement Supporting House Bill 456

Given before the Senate Finance Committee

In an unparalleled time of uncertainty, increasing the minimum monthly amount for Maryland's supplemental benefit under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to a minimum of \$40 per month and lowering the minimum age for that benefit to 60 years old would have a lasting impact on the lives of many struggling Marylanders. This would help promote economic security for low-income Marylanders struggling to keep food on the table as they face the impending benefit cliff, rising costs of food, and the continued hardship of the COVID-19 pandemic. For these reasons, **the Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 456 and urges the committee to restore the minimum age to 60, as included in bill as introduced.**

Even in good economic times, too many Maryland household struggled to put food on the table. Recent data has shown that the number of Marylanders who received SNAP benefits has reached historic levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of October 2021, the Department of Human Services shows that over 860,000 Marylanders are participating in SNAP, with a significant number of them being older adults.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the price of food has risen at rates that have not been seen before in recent history. Reports show that average annual food prices rose by 3.5% between 2019 and 2020. To put this figure in context, over the last 20 years the level of retail food price inflation has been 2% per year. This means that in 2020 the increase was 75% higher than the expected increase.ⁱ While these numbers can be attributed, in part, to the supply-chain issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of rapidly rising food costs is showing no signs of dissipating. Increasing the minimum supplemental benefit and extending it to reach more older adults is necessary to account for these rapid changes, so that Marylanders can put food on the table and meet their nutritional needs.

Investing in nutrition assistance programs is also good for Maryland's economy. Research shows that every \$5 invested in SNAP benefits generates \$9 in economic activity for participating grocery stores and farmer's markets.ⁱⁱ By raising the minimum monthly supplemental benefit to at least \$40 per month (the bill as introduced raised the minimum benefit to \$45 per month), the state will be able to foster healthier communities and boost the economy.

In addition to the immediate relief SNAP provides in the form of food assistance, evidence shows it also makes long-term improvements in the lives of individuals and families. Research shows that SNAP reduces food

insecurity and poverty, leading to improved health and economic outcomes as a result. This observation has been found to especially be the case for those who receive SNAP as children. Studies show that adults who participate in SNAP have fewer sick days, fewer doctor visits, and are less likely to exhibit psychological distress.

House Bill 456 is an important step in helping more low-income families afford to get enough to eat. SNAP has proven to be successful in creating more economic security for these families in need and can continue to be effective by making these changes to the supplemental benefit. Passing HB 456 and restoring the minimum age to be eligible for the minimum benefit to 60, rather than the current limit of 62, would have a modest cost to the state and a significant impact on the lives of older adults living in poverty.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Finance Committee give a favorable report to House Bill 456 and restore the minimum age to 60.

Equity Impact Analysis: House Bill 456

Bill summary

House Bill 456 raises the minimum monthly amount for Maryland's supplemental benefit under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program from \$30 to \$40. As introduced, it also lowered the minimum age to be eligible for these benefits from 62 to 60 years old, but the bill was amended prior to passing the House.

Background

The current minimum monthly supplemental benefit for SNAP participants is \$30 per month, but during the pandemic those who receive SNAP have been given the maximized allotment for their household size. When the federal public health emergency comes to an end, so will the maximum benefit allotment that families have been depending on through the COVID-19 pandemic. Many families will have their SNAP benefits recalculated and likely decreased immediately, leaving them in a position where they no longer have the financial resources necessary to meet their nutritional needs.

For example, when the emergency allotments end, an older adult household of one in Maryland would go from receiving \$250 per month to only receiving \$30 per month. This would greatly affect older adults who often receive the minimum amount due to having steady sources of income such as a pension or Social Security. However, many of these older people still depend on SNAP to supplement their food budget. Raising the minimum supplemental benefit would lessen the massive reduction that looms for many Marylanders when the public health emergency eventually ends.

Equity Implications

Policies in the past have led to a system of unequal opportunities for marginalized groups within Maryland. Although the most obvious racially discriminatory policies have long been overturned or mitigated, the impact of these policies continue to persist in both society and public policy and have led to significant racial and health disparities. People of color experience much higher rates of economic insecurity and poverty and are more likely to use SNAP to afford enough to eat.

Research shows that increasing economic security for households through programs like SNAP can help reduce

overall poverty, child poverty, and racial and ethnic inequities. Increasing the minimum monthly supplemental SNAP benefit and lowering the age requirement will enable this program to have a greater impact and reach more of those in need. Meeting this need strengthens our economy and can dismantle the economic barriers that too often hold back Marylanders of color.

Impact

House Bill 456 would likely **improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.

ⁱ “Food Prices and Spending,” The United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2021, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/food-prices-and-spending/?topicId=1afac93a-444e-4e05-99f3-53217721a8b>

ⁱⁱ “The Real Benefits of SNAP,” SNAP to Health, <https://www.snapttohealth.org/snap/the-real-benefits-of-the-snap-program/>

HPRP Testimony HB456_favorable_Senate Finance.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Madaio

Position: FAV



HOMELESS PERSONS REPRESENTATION PROJECT, INC.

201 North Charles Street, Suite 1104, Baltimore, Maryland 21201 (Headquarters)

(410) 685-6589 Toll Free (800) 773-4340 Fax (410) 625-0361

PO Box 1787, Rockville, Maryland 20849 (410) 387-3126 (Satellite Office)

www.hprplaw.org info@hprplaw.org

SUPPORT

HB 456 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement Senate Finance Committee, Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Testimony of Michelle Madaio, Director – Economic Justice, HPRP

The Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP) is a non-profit civil legal services organization that provides free legal representation to people who are experiencing homeless or at risk of homelessness on legal issues that will lead to an end to homelessness. HPRP regularly represents individuals and families in accessing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits through administrative appeals and advocacy.

HB 456 would reduce hunger among adults 62 and older in Maryland by increasing the minimum SNAP benefit from \$30 to \$40. The link between food insecurity and poor health outcomes is well documented. Increasing the minimum SNAP benefit means people experiencing food insecurity will have greater ability to purchase more groceries and more nutritious foods.¹ In fact, SNAP participants shared in interviews that a higher SNAP benefit results in greater financial ability to purchase fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins.² Increased purchasing of food will also positively impact Maryland’s economy: research on SNAP spending shows that increases to the SNAP benefit have a multiplier effect by generating more income for food production, distribution, marketing, and sales.³

The increase to the minimum SNAP benefit under HB 456 would incentivize more older adults living in poverty to apply for SNAP. HPRP has met many low-income Marylanders who are eligible for SNAP but who do not access the benefit when they would only qualify for the minimum amount. The time and onerous application process can deter many people from completing the application when the benefit is so low. Many older adults are living with disabilities and the number of trips back and forth to the local Department of Social Services offices on public transportation, long wait times, and paperwork simply make the process too cumbersome to complete for the minimum benefit. An increase to the minimum benefit would likely result in more older adults utilizing the SNAP program.

HPRP strongly urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 456. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Michelle Madaio (mmadaio@hprplaw.org).

1 Patricia M. Anderson, Kristin F. Butcher, “The Relationships Among SNAP Benefits, Grocery Spending, Diet Quality, and the Adequacy of Low-Income Families’ Resources,” Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, (June 2016) *available at* <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/6-14-16fa.pdf>

2 USDA, “SNAP Food Security In-Depth Interview Study, Final Report,” Nutrition Assistance Program Report Series, (March 2013) *available at* <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/SNAPFoodSec.pdf>

3 Canning, Patrick and Brian Stacy, “The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier,” ERR-265, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, July 2019, *available at* <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/93529/err-265.pdf?v=8010.7>

HB0456-FIN-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Natasha Mehu

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 456

March 29, 2022

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 456 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 456.

HB 456 addresses the critical issue of food insecurity among older adults by providing a State supplemental benefit under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as SNAP) by increasing the minimum total monthly benefit from \$30 to \$40.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Baltimore City saw an increase in food needs among older adults. As of January 31, 2022, the City has provided nearly 3 million meals and over 28,000 grocery boxes to older adults in need of food assistance. From June 2020 through December 2021, SNAP participation among older adults increased by 1,500 participants. As of December 2021, of the 174,114 Baltimore City residents on SNAP, 17,827 are older adults. The City anticipates a continued need to provide food assistance to older adults in the coming years and increasing minimum benefits will support this need.

The amount of SNAP each household receives is usually variable based on income threshold and household size. However, through the Congressional COVID-19 relief packages, SNAP allocations increased to provide the maximum benefits for each household based only on size. Currently a household of one can receive a maximum allotment of \$250. Eventually these emergency allotments will end and many older adults will see a significant drop in their SNAP benefits. For some older adults, this could drop down to just \$30 a month. Many older adults rely on SNAP to supplement their food budgets and an increase in the minimum benefit can offset this sharp decline.

*Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785
Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136
<https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov/>*

Participation in SNAP has also been shown to significantly improve low-income seniors' chances of living independently in the community as well as avoid hospitalization.¹ Specifically, a \$10 increase in monthly SNAP benefits reduced the odds of nursing home admissions and significantly reduced the odds of hospital admission and emergency department use. Additionally, giving SNAP to non-SNAP participants was associated with nursing home savings of \$34 million and an inpatient hospital savings of \$19 million. An increase in minimum benefits not only strengthens food security but can potentially reduce Medicare and Medicaid costs.

HB 456 aligns with the work Baltimore City is currently doing to ensure that older adults have access to food resources and are able to age in place.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on House Bill 456.

¹ https://bdtrust.org/Policy-Research-Brief_-_July-2018.pdf

2022 Moveable Feast HB 456 Senate Side.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: HB 456 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement

Hearing Date: March 30, 2022

Position: Support

My name is Olivia Massa, and I am a community dietician with Moveable Feast. We strongly support *House Bill 456 – Supplementation Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement*. Current law provides for a state supplement of \$30 for individuals 62 years or older and who receive a federally funded benefit of less than \$30 under SNAP. The bill modifies this provision to the following: If the individual is 60 years or older and receives a federally funded benefit of less than \$45, then the state will provide a state supplement of \$45.

Moveable Feast, through nutritional counseling and medically-tailored meals, serves individuals living at the intersection of food insecurity and chronic illness. In my role as a community dietitian, I have seen first-hand how SNAP benefits have helped to relieve some of those barriers. The recent increases in SNAP benefits over the past few months has had a significant impact for clients. One client specifically reported that because of the increased benefits, he was less stressed about running out of food before he could purchase more. Another client shared a similar story, and also emphasized that she was able to buy more fruits and vegetables and was eating them more regularly compared to when she was receiving a lower amount of SNAP benefits. A recent study showed a reduction in Medicaid costs after SNAP benefits increased, especially amongst those living chronic illnesses with high sensitivity to food insecurity (FRAC). As is indicated in the literature and my experience with Moveable Feast clients, expanding SNAP benefits, as is outlined in this legislation, would improve health

outcomes and food security for thousands of Marylanders, and ultimately decrease healthcare costs. On behalf of Moveable Feast and the clients we serve, I urge you to support this bill.

If I can provide any additional information, you may contact me through Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

Reference: <https://frac.org/programs/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/positive-effect-snap-benefits-participants-communities>

HB456_MRA_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Price

Position: FAV



HB456 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement
Finance Committee
March 29, 2022

Position: Favorable

Background: HB456 as introduced amends the existing state program to raise the SNAP minimum payment for older adults from \$30 to \$45 a month and to lower the eligibility age to receive this boost from 62 to 60.

Comments: On behalf of the Maryland Food Industry Council, a committee of the Maryland Retailers Association representing the majority of chain and independent food retailers, as well as suppliers, distributors and specialty food companies in our State, we urge the committee's support on HB456. SNAP increases not only help to reduce poverty, alleviate hunger, and improve well-being, but also positively impact the economy. Every \$1 invested in SNAP generates up to \$1.80 of economic activity.

A study conducted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in 2020 found that SNAP benefits are one of the fastest, most effective forms of economic stimulus because the money is quickly injected back into the local economy. It found that every SNAP dollar a low-income family receives enables the family to spend an additional dollar on food, shelter, or transportation. Further proof of this immediate spend is found in the data: 80 percent of SNAP benefits are redeemed within two weeks of receipt and 97 percent are spent within a one-month period of time. Both the Congressional Budget Office and Moody's Analytics rate SNAP expenditures as one of the most effective and efficient supports for the economy.

With this in mind, we urge a favorable report and would support amendments to return the bill to its original posture. Thank you for your consideration.