



---

## **FAVORABLE - HB-1352 Health Standards Plant-Based Meals in Prisons**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee:

The Standard American Diet (SAD) is a modern dietary pattern that is generally characterized by high intakes of red meat, processed meat, pre-packaged foods, butter, fried foods, high-fat dairy products, eggs, refined grains, potatoes, corn (and high-fructose corn syrup) and high-sugar drinks. While the SAD diet is what Americans choose to eat, a review of the 5-week meal cycle, which shows the food served by Maryland Department of Public Safety in its state-wide correctional facilities, shows that the inmates (who do not have a choice of what they can eat) are served 25 million meals a year of the same SAD diet, which consist on average of 52 oz of meat, poultry and eggs per week. This analysis shows that meals are deficient in key nutrients such as fiber, vitamin K (from fresh greens) and several other vitamins, and provides significantly too much protein, fat and sodium. The analysis also shows that inmates are receiving 48% more protein and 101% more carbohydrates than the recommended daily allowance, while receiving 50% less fiber and 30% less water recommended for a baseline healthy diet.

What makes this diet particularly SAD, is that animal food served to the inmates is almost 2 times than the maximum recommendation of 26 oz per week from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. As a certified holistic nutritionist, and wellness advocate for the life-saving benefits of plant-based nutrition, I can say, based on my review of the DPSC Master Meal Cycle, that the diet served to the inmates in Maryland's correctional facilities substantially increases the inmates risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, stroke and some forms of cancer.

If an inmate went into any one of the facilities without any disease and not on medication, after several years of eating the food in corrections, the inmate is bound to have some type of chronic disease.

I earned my Ph.D. and M.S. in Industrial and Systems Engineering, from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and what I see as a key problem is the fact that more is spent on treating chronic disease, at \$19 per day per inmate or \$136 million per year as compared to the \$1.66 spent on meals. These spend amounts need to be reversed, wherein more is spent on whole plant-based food and less on prescriptions and expensive surgeries.



**ALLEGHENY EAST CONFERENCE CORPORATION**  
of Seventh-day Adventists®

March 7, 2022

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass - Chair  
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk - Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 241  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: FAVORABLE – HB1352 – Health Standards – Plant-Based Meals in Prisons & Hospitals**

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committees:

The Allegheny East Conference Corporation of Seventh-Day Adventists (AEC) operates and oversees 179, churches, 34 companies and 9 missions with a membership of over 32,000 that reside in the states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. In Maryland alone, Seventh-day Adventists have approximately 174 churches that represent approximately 60,000 members that are part of the Columbia Union of churches. We are Bible-believing Christians who base faith, hope, and the future in Jesus Christ. The name 'Seventh-day' indicates our adherence to the Biblical Sabbath of Friday sundown to Saturday sundown, while 'Adventist' means we anticipate the promised return of Christ.

Seventh-day Adventists operate health care institutions, like Adventist HealthCare, which is a not-for-profit health services organization based in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The institution employs more than 6,000 people and provides healthcare for more than 400,000 individuals in the community each year.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is considered a pioneer of the vegetarian movement in America. As early as 1863, one of our church founders advocated for a return to the plant-based diet outlined in Genesis 1:29 (KJV) which states, "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." The word "meat" in Hebrew means food. Consequently, the Church teaches the original diet ordained by God is a plant-based diet that includes fruits, nuts, grains, vegetables, legumes, and seeds historically called the vegetarian diet, now termed a plant-based diet.

The Church recognizes the Bible permits the consumption of animal-based foods after the flood, with the restriction that only clean animals should be eaten. But the Church encourages its

*physical* 767 Douglass Drive | Boyertown, Pennsylvania 19512  
*mailing* Post Office Box 266 | Pine Forge, Pennsylvania 19548  
*telephone* 610 326 4610 *facsimile* 610 326 3946 *website* [visitaec.com](http://visitaec.com)

members to choose the Genesis 1:29 diet as the best dietary choice for spiritual growth and physical development. Research done around the world supports the Genesis diet as one that can prevent and even reverse disease.

There are variations of the vegetarian diet, e.g., the lacto-ovo vegetarian diet that includes dairy and eggs. SDA members practice according to their choice.

The SDA Church university, Loma Linda University, established a large-scale, long-term epidemiological study on vegetarians called the Adventist Health Study. It demonstrated the health benefits of the plant based/vegetarian diet. The study showed vegetarians had much lower rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and several other major degenerative diseases. In 2004, National Geographic performed a 10-year study called the Blue Zones and identified Seventh-day Adventist members living in Loma Linda, California are amongst those who live the longest in the world.

The Blue Zone study identified the healthful living practices, including the plant-based/vegetarian diet lifestyle of the Church as one of the primary reasons for longer life for those living in Loma Linda. Due to our history as a pioneer plant-based Church, AEC supports the legislative objectives of HB-1352 to provide inmates and patients in hospitals the ability to choose plant-based meal options.

While our Church hospitals share the rich history of vegetarian advocacy, due to our Churches respect for the dietary choices of the people we serve in our hospitals, and in the prisons we serve. Consequently, the Church sees HB1352 as an opportunity for our prison ministry missionary workers to provide education in the prisons regarding the benefits of a plant-based diet in order improve the health of the inmates, which our own epidemiological studies proved long ago, as the solution to preventing and even reversing chronic degenerative disease.

Finally, one of the Church's very active ministries in the U.S. is our prison ministry. HB1352 will allow our prison inmate converts to have the option to choose plant-based meals in Maryland correctional facilities.

It is for these reasons AEC requests a favorable report on HB1352.

Sincerely,



Jackson M. Doggette Jr., Esq.,  
General Counsel

Another problem with the prison food services, is the quantity and quality of the food served. Based on the master meal cycle the quality of food served is poor due to highly processed meats, breads and sugar filled products. The quantity of extremely processed foods, containing high amounts of saturated fats, cholesterol and sugar are much too high. Additionally, it is reported that the food, taste's bad and is not properly handled, which results in contamination and spoilage. According to reports by the prison research group "Farm To Prison" which has analyzed the food production and procurement system in most of the state facilities for the last year, the prison food is cooked and served by the inmates who are rotated out in and out of the kitchen every 6 months. This rapid turnover of inmate workers, contributes to poor quality food and improper handling due to quick and ineffective training.

To address these nutritional, quantity, and quality issues, I will be working with Coppin State and Bowies State to provide a Plant-Based Culinary Medicine and nutrition course in the prisons to train the workers and inmates so that they will choose the plant-based meal options provided through HB-1352. Dr. Tracy Murry will speak more about the U.S. Department Second Chance Pell Grant program that allows universities to enter the prisons to offer degree and certificate programs.

Therefore, through training, education and the passage of HB-1352, I am, along with the medical professionals of the newly formed 501c3 - the HBCU College of Plant-Based Lifestyle Medicine for which I serve as President, confident that inmates who enter Maryland's correctional facilities can, if they choose, leave in better health thereby costing the state less money on health care and reduce recidivism.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruby Lathon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ruby" and the last name "Lathon" clearly distinguishable.

Ruby Lathon, PhD, MS Certified  
Holistic Nutritionist Director,  
Roadmap to Holistic Health



6 E Lafayette Ave, Baltimore, MD 21202  
Phone: (443) 863-8652

March 7, 2022

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Delegate, Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241 House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Subject: FAVORABLE - HB1352– Health Standards Plant-Based Meals in Prisons & Hospitals**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee:

The U.S. spends at least 18% of its GDP (\$3.35 trillion) on health expenditures. If costs continue to rise, by 2050 Medicare and Medicaid alone will account for 20% of the GDP.<sup>1</sup> All projections point to continued rises in chronic disease. It has been stated by the American College of Lifestyle Medicine that Type 2 diabetes alone is a looming global pandemic with incalculable consequences.<sup>2</sup>

According to the American Diabetes Association, Maryland, as of 2014, Maryland spends \$6.5 Million on diabetes related illnesses.<sup>3</sup> The Maryland Department of Health reports that heart disease is the number 1 cause of death of Maryland residents. According to the American College of Lifestyle Medicine, 80% or more of all healthcare spending in the U.S. is tied to the treatment of conditions rooted in poor lifestyle choices.

As result of this data regarding the poor health of Maryland Residents, Thrive Baltimore was founded as a dynamic community resource center located in the Station North community of Baltimore City to address the poor lifestyle choices of Baltimore residents through education. Run by a collective of food, environmental and social justice activists, our mission is to provide education, resources and support to anyone interested in adopting a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle.

Part of Thrive Baltimore’s mission is to provide free plant-based cooking demos, nutrition lectures, food tastings, film screenings and other fun, informational programming in an open, socially conscious environment

---

<sup>1</sup> See Lifestyle Medicine Economic Research - <https://lmeconomicresearch.org/>

<sup>2</sup> See What is Lifestyle Medicine <https://www.lifestylemedicine.org/What-is-Lifestyle-Medicine>

<sup>3</sup> See “The Burden of Diabetes in Maryland” - American Diabetes Association, Maryland - <http://main.diabetes.org/dorg/PDFs/Advocacy/burden-of-diabetes/maryland.pdf>

that makes it a space where all are welcome. We're dedicated to encouraging people to make healthier, kinder choices that will enable them to live more conscious lifestyles.

By offering low-cost delicious vegan food at all our events, we at Thrive Baltimore are doing our part to raise awareness and address the health disparities and food access issues that plague Baltimore City. We're also providing a practical alternative to the current food systems which cause so much harm to our health, our planet and the animals with whom we share the Earth.

Thrive Baltimore supports HB-1352 because it provides inmates and patients in hospitals the opportunity to choose to eat a healthy plant-based meal. Moreover, we are most excited about the fact that HB-1352 also encourages medical professionals in prisons and hospitals to obtain education in plant-based nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine, which is the use of evidence-based lifestyle therapeutic approaches, such as a plant- predominant dietary lifestyle, regular physical activity, adequate sleep, stress management, avoiding use of harmful substances and pursuing other non-drug modalities to treat, reverse and prevent chronic disease. The educational training is aligned with our mission at Thrive and we believe that the education portion of the bill will be the greatest opportunity to truly reduce the health disparities that exist in Baltimore.

At the end day, when returned citizens are healthy and health care providers are properly equipped to prevent and reverse chronic degenerative disease, communities can truly become healthy communities.

Therefore, we request a favorable report for HB-1352.

Sincerely,

*Adam Weissman*

Adam Weissman  
Community Relations Manager

## **FAVORABLE**

### **HB-1352**

#### Health and Wellness Standards - Correctional Facilities and Health Care Facilities

March 7, 2022

Presented by Daphene Altema-Johnson

*Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Johns Hopkins University.*

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the HGO Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record in support of HB-1352.

We are researchers and educators at the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, an interdisciplinary academic center focused on food systems and public health. The Center is in the Bloomberg School of Public Health's Department of Environmental Health and Engineering. We have been researching the health and environmental impacts of dietary patterns, including Meatless Monday, a global movement with grassroots programs that encourage people to cut meat from their diets one day a week to promote personal and environmental health. Meatless Monday is a non-profit initiative of the Monday Campaigns which works in collaboration with our center, Columbia University and Syracuse University, and has been adopted in over 40 countries and in 22 languages. The Meatless Monday campaign has been successful because of its simple and actionable message. We believe that in expanding plant-based meal options in state prisons, HB 1352 would improve the environmental and human health impacts associated with unhealthy dietary patterns for incarcerated individuals.

As public health professionals, we have reviewed the literature on the relationship between dietary patterns and chronic diseases, and the evidence is clear: high consumption of red and processed meat and low consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and legumes are important risk factors contributing to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, colorectal cancer, and all-cause mortality.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Currently, people who are incarcerated are being served approximately twice the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommended 34-ounce equivalent

---

<sup>1</sup> Zheng Y, Li Y, Satija A, et al. (2019). Association of changes in red meat consumption with total and cause specific mortality among US women and men: Two prospective cohort studies. *BMJ*, 365, 12110.

<sup>2</sup> Schwingshackl, L., Hoffmann, G., Lampousi, A. M., Knüppel, S., Iqbal, K., Schwedhelm, C., ... & Boeing, H. (2017). Food groups and risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus: a systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective studies. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, 32, 363–375.

<sup>3</sup> Micha, R., Peñalvo, J. L., Cudhea, F., Imamura, F., Rehm, C. D., & Mozaffarian, D. (2017). Association between dietary factors and mortality from heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes in the United States. *Jama*, 317(9), 912-924.

<sup>4</sup> Bouvard, V., Loomis, D., Guyton, K. Z., Grosse, Y., Ghissassi, F. E., Benbrahim-Tallaa, L., ... & Corpet, D. (2015). Carcinogenicity of consumption of red and processed meat. *The Lancet Oncology*, 16(16), 1599-1600.

of animal protein per week (or 4.8 ounces/day; includes meat, dairy and eggs)<sup>5</sup>. Research shows an inverse association between whole grain intake and the risk of type 2 diabetes, meaning people who eat more whole grains tend to have lower risk of type 2 diabetes.<sup>6</sup> Substituting daily half serving of meat with nuts or whole grains can decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes by 15%<sup>7</sup>. Foods like whole wheat, oats, quinoa, farro and rye, which are not currently offered at the correctional facilities, are important pantry staples when it comes to preventing or managing diabetes and heart disease.

In 2011, correctional facilities in Maryland spent \$3 million on hospitalizations of inmates for heart failure, renal failures, strokes, and acute respiratory failure<sup>8</sup>. However, taking preventative measures such as adopting basic lifestyle changes, like a plant-rich diet, will not only decrease hospitalization and prescription costs, but will also lower the risk of heart diseases, diabetes, obesity and some cancers. Overall, reducing the amount of meat incarcerated people consume by one day a week would afford people basic physiological benefits that are ultimately better for their health and are cost effective for the state of Maryland. Large numbers of studies have proven time and time again people who consume a diet high in vegetables, fruits, legumes and whole grains have a lower risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, some cancers, and stroke<sup>9</sup>. Per correctional facilities' policy, to regularly receive a plant-based meal such as lacto/ovo vegetarian, or vegan, an incarcerated person must have a medical prescription from a facility doctor. If they are able to receive and have more plant-based options available on a daily basis, they are likely to develop healthier eating habits. Furthermore, an incarcerated person only receives periodic health evaluations every four years, which means that many health conditions and/or illnesses have progressed to irreversible levels before intervention or treatments can start. This lack of healthy food access in prisons has not only severe health and equity implications, but economic ones as well.

In addition to the benefits listed above, decreasing meat and dairy consumption is also great for the environment. Large public institutions including school systems, universities, hospitals,

---

<sup>5</sup> Healthy US-Style Pattern Recommended Intake Amounts.

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/usda\\_food\\_patterns/HealthyUS-StylePattern-RecommendedIntakeAmounts.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/usda_food_patterns/HealthyUS-StylePattern-RecommendedIntakeAmounts.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Kyro, C., Tjonneland, A., Overvad, K., Olsen, A., & Landberg, R. (2018). Higher Whole-Grain Intake Is Associated with Lower Risk of Type 2 Diabetes among Middle-Aged Men and Women: The Danish Diet, Cancer, and Health Cohort. *J Nutr*, 148(9), 1434-1444. doi:10.1093/jn/nxy112

<sup>7</sup> Pan A, Sun Q, Bernstein AM, et al. Changes in red meat consumption and subsequent risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus: three cohorts of US men and women. *JAMA Intern Med* 2013;173:1328-35. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.6633

<sup>8</sup> Wexford Health Sources, Inc., Maryland Department of Public Safety and Corrections Monthly UM Status Report 2011 <http://dpscs.maryland.gov/publicinfo/publications/pdfs/IHS/Medical-Services-Attachment-QA-13.pdf>

<sup>9</sup>Bertoia ML, Mukamal KJ, Cahill LE, Hou T, Ludwig DS, Mozaffarian D, Willett WC, Hu FB, Rimm EB. Changes in intake of fruits and vegetables and weight change in United States men and women followed for up to 24 years: analysis from three prospective cohort studies. *PLoS medicine*. 2015 Sep 22;12(9):e1001878.

correctional facilities and senior care residences hold tremendous purchasing power and supply about \$83 billion worth of food each year throughout the country.<sup>10</sup> Many studies, including research from our center,<sup>11</sup> show that a small number of emissions-intensive foods, including meat and dairy, account for the majority of the emissions associated with our diets. Encouraging a shift away from emissions-intensive foods and toward diets that are higher in plant-based proteins, fruits, and vegetables is critical for planetary and human health. Providing greater access to plant-based options in Maryland correctional facilities would position Maryland as a leader in promoting sustainable food systems and health. In addition, S.B. 768 would offer incarcerated people healthier dietary options by ensuring that healthy plant-based meals are offered to all incarcerated people.

Meatless Monday is a simple, yet effective, program that has garnered the attention of food brands, celebrities, restaurants, and many in the foodservice industry (hospitals, universities, K-12 and corporate companies). It uses weekly prompts and the unique cultural associations of Monday as the beginning of the week to positively affect a range of healthy behaviors, including eating healthy, exercising, and quitting smoking. Studies show Monday is the best day to begin healthier habits. According to a survey by Data Decision Group, 57% of people intend to eat healthier on Mondays. With Meatless Monday and plant-based options available in correctional facilities, people who are incarcerated would have a scheduled plant-based meal to possibly reduce the amount of animal protein consumed and increase intake of vegetables and plant-based foods to levels that are at least on par with the USDA recommendations.

HB 1352 will benefit the climate and the health of thousands of vulnerable Maryland citizens. Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

**Daphne Altema-Johnson, MPH MBA**

Program Officer

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Johns Hopkins University

**Becky Ramsing, MPH, RDN**

Senior Program Officer

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Johns Hopkins University

---

<sup>10</sup> Santo, R. E., & Fitch, C. M. (2019). From Foodservice Management Contracts to US Federal Legislation: Progress and Barriers in Values-Based Food Procurement Policies. In *Institutions as Conscious Food Consumers* (pp. 77-102). Academic Press.

<sup>11</sup> Kim, B. F., Santo, R. E., Scatterday, A. P., Fry, J. P., Synk, C. M., Cebon, S. R., ... & Nachman, K.E. (2019). Country-specific dietary shifts to mitigate climate and water crises. *Global Environmental Change*, 101926.



March 7, 2022

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241 - House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Subject: FAVORABLE - HB-1352– Health Standards Plant-Based Meals in Prisons**

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee Members:

The NAACP Prince George's Branch supports HB-1352 - Health and Wellness Standards - Correctional Facilities as one of the greatest health and wellness bills that could improve the health of vulnerable and minority communities in legislative history. As you aware, in the latest 2017 report on the causes of death for Prince George's County residents it indicates that heart disease (1,450 deaths) and cancer (1,460 deaths) are responsible for half of all deaths in the county, followed by stroke (364 deaths) and diabetes (253 deaths). Many of these leading causes of death in the county are due to chronic disease. Unmanaged chronic disease is said to have contributed largely to health care costs. Prevention, management and even reversal of chronic disease can improve the overall health and life expectancy of residents in the county.

Therefore, in 2018, during the Maryland State Conference Annual Convention, the Prince George's County delegation supported the Plant-based Based Meals for hospitals, prisons, and K-12 Resolution authored by NAACP Montgomery County Branch member, social justice advocate and Attorney Jo Saint-George. The goal of the resolution was to ensure that the Maryland and Prince George's County residents are educated and empower with information on how to improve and reverse chronic disease through access to plant-based meals and medical providers trained in Lifestyle Medicine. Not only was the Plant-Based Meal Resolution voted and approved by the Maryland State Conference as a state-wide legislative priority, in July 2019 during the National Annual Convention, the NAACP nationals approved of the resolution which is now a national priority for the NAACP 2,200 branches and over 600,000 members.

As a national priority to reduce health disparities amongst our African-American members national wide, the Prince George's County Branch strongly supports the goals of HB1352, which is to provide inmates with the ability to improve their health through healthy plant-based food options.

The NAACP Prince George's County Branch believes that an inmate's access to health whole plant-based foods in prison is critical to the economic development and health of our county. With over 70% of the Maryland's prison population are African American, many of which come from Prince George's County, having healthy returning citizens improves the overall health of the community.

Therefore, the Prince George's County Branch respectfully requests a favorable report on HB-1352.

Sincerely,

*Linda Thornton-Thomas*

Linda Thornton-Thomas  
President



## Division of Research and Economic Development

### **FAVORABLE HB-1352**

Health Standards – Plant-Based Meals in Prisons and Hospitals  
March 7, 2022 @ 1:30pm

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committees:

As the Assistant Vice President of Research and Innovation and Advocacy for Morgan State University (“Morgan”), it is a great honor and privilege to offer this letter of support of HB -1352 Health and Wellness Standards - Correctional Facilities and Health Care Facilities. HB-1352 serves as an opportunity for Morgan to expand its educational services to inmates while launching an innovative program that can bring evidenced based lifestyle therapeutic approaches to treating, and reversing chronic degenerative diseases to treat the cause of disease and not just symptoms, also known as Lifestyle Medicine.

Since 1999, Morgan State University has operated its Public Health Program to produce a new generation of public health professionals. In 2005, the School of Community Health and Policy (SCHP) was created to expand the University's health mission and program offerings to better respond to the need for a well prepared, diverse, culturally responsive health professions workforce. Salient characteristics of the School are its focus on urban communities, elimination of health disparities, and its use of a practice-based service learning framework.

Now that we are 20 years since the founding of the Public Health Program, and the health disparities in the communities Morgan serves have worsened with deaths from heart disease and diabetes complications souring to epic proportions. Our office of Research Innovation and Advocacy has embarked on an effort to produce a new generation of public health professionals equipped with new skills to tackle the health crisis of today.

In 2019, Morgan participated in a convening of all our Maryland HBCUs hosted by Attorney Saint-George, Political Action Chair of the NAACP Maryland State Conference, and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, for the purpose of inviting our schools to participate in the U.S. Department of Education Second Chance Pell Grant program. The Pell program pays the tuition of inmates who desire to obtain an education in prison, which results in increased enrollment at each school. During the meeting Ms. Saint-George shared her goal introducing this bill during this 2020 Legislative Session and the need to create a prison education program that would help inmates to gain work ready skills as well as earn degrees so when they are released they are better equipped to be hired.



## Division of Research and Economic Development

2 | Page

Through the negotiation of the Letter of Intent for all the Maryland HBCUs with the DOE by Ms. Saint-George, all schools have or are now completing the application process to offer 4-year degree and certification programs in our Maryland prisons.

In 2019, Morgan participated in a convening of all our Maryland HBCUs hosted by Attorney Saint-George, Political Action Chair of the NAACP Maryland State Conference, and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, for the purpose of inviting our schools to participate in the U.S. Department of Education Second Chance Pell Grant program. The Pell program pays the tuition of inmates who desire to obtain an education in prison, which results in increased enrollment at each school. During the meeting Ms. Saint-George shared her goal introducing this bill during this 2020 Legislative Session and the need to create a prison education program that would help inmates to gain work ready skills as well as earn degrees so when they are released they are better equipped to be hired. Through the negotiation of the Letter of Intent for all the Maryland HBCUs with the DOE by Ms. Saint-George, all schools have or are now completing the application process to offer 4-year degree and certification programs in our Maryland prisons.

Specifically, Morgan and Coppin have made requests to the DOE to offer a certification program in “Culinary Medicine” and Plant-based Nutrition, so that inmates can be trained in the preparation of plant-based meals not only for the prisons (to ensure that the quality and taste of the plant-based foods to be serve as a result of this bill is provided), but also to prepare inmates to become Plant-Based Chefs to meet the growing demand for chefs in the plant-based industry. As a result of Ms. Saint-George’s summer convening, Morgan and Coppin has been introduced to the American College of Lifestyle Medicine Culinary Medicine curriculum as a new and innovative program that both schools can adopt to certify inmates and on campus students in this new area of Lifestyle Medicine. The data is clear that most chronic degenerative diseases that our schools of public health have equipped students to address are diseases created by lifestyle that can be reversed or prevented.

Therefore, it is now the mission of our school to train inmates and our students with 21<sup>st</sup> Century interventions of Lifestyle Medicine to address the root causes of diseases to change the health outcomes in our communities.

Consequently, Morgan State University fully supports the objectives of HB-1352 and plans to become a partner with the prisons, the Maryland Department of Health, Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities and the hospitals to produce the next generation of public health workers equipped with evidenced based health care that focuses on the cause of disease in order to effectively reduce the health disparities that impact the prison population and Maryland residents.



## Division of Research and Economic Development

3 | Page

Should your committee need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [Timothy.Akers@Morgan.Edu](mailto:Timothy.Akers@Morgan.Edu), 443.885.3798 (office), or 706.255.3963 (cell).

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Akers, M.S., Ph.D.  
Assistant Vice President for Research Innovation and Advocacy  
Professor of Public Health  
Division of Research and Economic Development  
Morgan State University



**Testimony of Ricarra Jones, Political Director of 1199SEIU  
Health and Wellness Standards - Correctional Facilities and Health Care  
Facilities HB 1352  
Position: FAVORABLE  
March 7, 2022**

1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East (1199SEIU) is the largest healthcare union in the country with, with over 450,000 members throughout Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Florida and Washington, D.C. **We fully support this ground breaking bill that contains a component, which, if passed, could result in our Maryland healthcare workers obtaining training in Lifestyle Medicine and plant-based nutrition as well as providing inmates and patients in hospitals the right to request plant based meals.**

It is no secret that the U.S. spends at least 18% of its GDP (\$3.35 trillion) on health expenditures. If costs continue to rise, by 2050 Medicare and Medicaid alone will account for 20% of the GDP. It is also a well known fact that 80% or more of all healthcare spending in the U.S. is tied to the treatment of conditions rooted in poor lifestyle choices. Chronic diseases and conditions—such as hypertension, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis, multiple types of cancer—are among the most common, costly and preventable of all health conditions.

What is most alarming, however, is that most physicians and healthcare workers in our union do not receive adequate training in the basics of Lifestyle Medicine—nutrition and physical activity—yet we know that 85 percent of chronic disease today is caused by unhealthy lifestyle choices in these and other areas.

Furthermore, it is our union healthcare workers who are responsible either with delivering and/or assisting patients in hospitals with consuming their meals when admitted. Our workers, in many instances, want to provide or help patients to eat better food when they are admitted into the hospital, but most meal menus in hospitals do not have whole plant-based meal options. Therefore, patients who may want to choose to eat plant-based foods with high in fiber and complex carbohydrates do not have an option on the hospital menu to select a plant-based meal. Also, our community health workers would be empowered with new tools and approaches to assist patients released from the hospital with maintaining better lifestyle habits that will improve the patient outcomes.

Finally, we also strongly support the ability for inmates to choose to improve their health through the consumption of whole plant-based meals in prison.

Consequently, 1199SEIU strongly supports HB1352 as a bill that will help revolutionize health care delivery and health outcomes through access to whole plant-based foods for patients and inmates and through the bills education and training component as it addresses the need for medical physicians and healthcare staff to be up to date with the food trends in the market so health care delivery is not only cost effective but yields outcomes that can lead to reduction of chronic degenerative diseases within Maryland, particularly in minority communities.

**We, therefore, urge members of Maryland's General Assembly to pass HB-1352.**



**FAVORABLE**  
**HB-1352**

Health and Wellness Standards - Correctional Facilities  
( "PLANT-BASED MEAL Bill FOR PRISONS ")  
March 9, 2022 @ 1:30PM

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee:

Violence and chronic diseases are plaguing communities of color. A cause of chronic disease stems from unhealthy eating and living. The correlation between chronic disease, unhealthy eating and living can be traced to fear and violence in the communities. In the 70's and 80's, people were more likely to spend more time outside engaging in physical activities. More specifically, children and young adults were more engaged in physical activities outside of their homes in urban settings considering violence and crime were not tolerated in what was considered as Clean Block Neighborhoods (Afro Staff, 2017). Now, residents of those once calm and peaceful neighborhoods are too intimidated by gangs and drug solicitations to spend time outside of their homes or nearby parks (Katz, Webb, & Armstrong, 2003).

Regarding the inmate population, prisoners are not able to choose when they eat, the way food is prepared, where they will eat or what they will eat which can cause great frustration with the inmates, resulting in more violence as a way of resisting the institutional framework ("Inmate not entitled to special fasting diet.", 2018).

Coppin State University, an HBCU is uniquely positioned to educate prisoners with dedicated professors who can teach the benefits of plant-based nutrition and lifestyle management to help inmates to make the right food choices – currently they do not have choice and passing this bill will give them the right to choose and we as professors are well equipped to teach them how to make effective choices.

For example, diabetes and prediabetes cost the state of Maryland \$6.5 billion dollars per year. A plant-based diet can address this health care issue. Coppin State University College of Health Profession address this healthcare and challenge in addition to cardiovascular health awareness.

Coppin's Community Health Center (CHC) is proof of the commitment to community engagement by providing health services including health education and preventive-care to reduce health disparities.

The majority of Coppin's College of Health Professions students (nursing and allied health) are recruited from Baltimore City and the immediate surrounding area. Over 90 percent of the students in the Helene Fuld School of Nursing (HFSN) and the School of Allied Health (SAH) are "underserved" from an educationally or economically disadvantaged background or a racial or ethnic majority underrepresented in health care. Our student and faculty population would be able to fulfil the demand for community-minded health workers equipped with cultural sensitivity and expertise in helping underserved communities to make "Lifestyle Changes" to improve their health and reduce health disparities.



Chair, Vice Chair and Committee  
Page 2  
February 11, 2021

Plant-based diets have been in the African American community since the 60s and 70s with the Black Hebrew Israelites and the Nation of Islam (Williams, 2019). The embracing of the plant-based diet during this era was a way of becoming healthier and reducing the consumption of medicine that may cause more health problems. With the insurgence of fast-food restaurants in our communities, or food deserts, unhealthy lifestyles and morbidity rates have increased.

Your passage of this bill will allow our schools to increase enrollment with new student populations while at the same time directly reducing health disparities in prisons and the community. Thus, this will allow us to respond to the demand for plant-based lifestyle management alternatives to meat. the health care delivery models that are appropriate to the community

CSU, as an HBCU, is ready to help make the outcomes of HB-1352 a measurable success.

Sincerely,

Tracey L. Murray, DNP, CRNP, FNP-BC, RN  
Dean and Professor  
Chief Academic Nursing Officer  
Director of the Health Centers

#### References

- Afro Staff. (2017). AFRO Clean Block Campaign Returns. *The Afro American Newspapers*. Retrieved from <https://www.afro.com/afro-clean-block-campaign-returns/>
- Inmate not entitled to special fasting diet. (2018, October 28). *Virginia Lawyers Weekly*. Retrieved from [https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.umuc.edu/apps/doc/A560654874/AONE?u=umd\\_umuc&sid=AONE&xid=87ad964d](https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.umuc.edu/apps/doc/A560654874/AONE?u=umd_umuc&sid=AONE&xid=87ad964d)
- Katz, C. M., Webb, V. J., & Armstrong, T. A. (2003). Fear of gangs: A test of alternative theoretical models. *Justice Quarterly*, 20(1), 95–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418820300095471>
- Williams, J. P. (2019). Black Americans Ditch Meat — and Stereotypes. *U.S. News - The Civic Report*, C11.