

**Maryland State House Committee  
February 21, 2023**

**TESTIMONY  
HB 452– SNAP for Students Act**

**Submitted by:  
Caitlin Silver Negrón, M.S., Basic Needs Coordinator  
Anne Arundel Community College**

**Position:** Support

I want to extend my gratitude to bill sponsor Delegate Kaufman and the committee for taking the time to review and acknowledge my testimony concerning HB 452, which will expand Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) benefits for college students, an integral part of the fight against food insecurity. According to the [Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice](#), food insecurity is defined as “the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, or the ability to acquire such food in a socially acceptable manner.” In my role as Basic Needs Coordinator at Anne Arundel Community College, I serve those students who are living with food insecurity. Food access should be a right, not a privilege, particularly for those who are dedicating their time to earning an education with the ultimate goal of entering the workforce, often right here in Maryland.

Food insecurity continues to be a monumental and avoidable barrier to educational completion and success. One major side effect of food insecurity, hunger, represents an immediate need that must continually be addressed. Imagine, if you will, how you would perform your day to day responsibilities on an empty stomach. Perhaps you would feel faint, achy, exhausted, “hangry,” distracted, agitated. No one does their best work when their body lacks sustenance. The myth that college students survive happily on sodium rich and nutrient poor Ramen noodles leads to the dangerous notion that they are not worthy of proper nutrition simply because they cannot afford it. Being financially insecure must never equate to the degradation of being treated as less than human.

Systemically, 108 billion pounds of food, or roughly 130 billion meals are wasted in the United States each year ([per Feeding America](#)). This speaks directly to the inequitable access to food that is completely preventable with changes like that of this bill. Far too much food goes to waste rather than being purchased at more affordable costs. The SNAP for Students Act will tip the scales that have been unbalanced for far too long in terms of equitable access to food for college students experiencing food insecurity.

I respectfully request your support of this bill in order to offer holistic support to those college students who are experiencing chronic food insecurity. Change for the better can be implemented. You hold immense power to change lives, and I hope that you will continue to yield it well. Thank you for your time and commitment to improving the lives of those you represent.