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## MARYLAND ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



**Date:** February 21, 2023  
**Bill:** House Bill 452 - Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students)  
**Committee:** House Appropriations Committee  
The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair  
**Position:** FAVORABLE

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND), is an organization representing approximately 1,200 licensed dietitians and nutritionists, dietetic interns, and students within the state of Maryland.

House Bill 452 will: *“require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a new State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit for a student who (1) is a resident of the State; (2) is enrolled in an institution of higher education for at least 15 credit hours per year; and (3) meets the “eligible income threshold.” Beginning in fiscal 2026, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation in an amount sufficient to reimburse DHS for expenditures made to provide benefits in the second prior fiscal year. The benefit is contingent on the expiration of the expanded student eligibility for benefits under the federal SNAP. If the expanded student eligibility expires due to the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) and no substantially similar federal legislation is enacted, the benefit must take effect within 30 days after the expiration. DHS must notify the Department of Legislative Services within 5 days after the expiration of the expanded student eligibility benefit under SNAP.”*

Food insecurity among college students has become an emerging public health and educational concern among colleges and universities across the country. Recent studies report between 30-50% of college students experiences some level of food insecurity that is nearly two-fold higher than the general public. Food insecurity in the past has disproportionately affected students of color, older students, parenting students, former foster youth, and first-generation college students.

A research study was done at the University of Maryland to measure the prevalence of food insecurity among its students (4,901 students). About 20% of UMD students surveyed were food insecure at some point in the 12 months preceding the survey, with 13% experiencing low levels of food security and 7% experiencing very low levels of food security. An additional 21% of the respondents reported marginal food insecurity levels. Consequently, marginal food insecurity and food insecure added up to 41%.(4)

The statistics are even more pronounced at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). For example, a 2018 survey of students, faculty, staff and administrators was conducted by Morgan State University’s Division of Student Affairs, 68 percent of the students who were surveyed said they were food insecure. The survey also found that 71 percent of students reported skipping meals because they had a limited supply of food, and 67 percent said they borrowed food or money due to a lack of food.(5) Nutrition professionals who are affiliated with colleges and universities across the country have the potential to lead efforts to improve food security status of college students.

MAND stands ready as a resource and partner in this important undertaking. Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We respectfully ask for a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 452.

Thank you for your consideration.

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**References:**

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2. US Government Accountability Office. Food insecurity: Better information could help eligible college students access federal food assistance benefits. Published January 9, 2019. <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-95>. Accessed February 21, 2019.
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