



## **House Bill 452 Food Supplement Benefits – Students – Eligibility (SNAP for Students)**

House Appropriation Committee  
February 21, 2023

### **Support**

**Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports HB 452**, which requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a new State Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for low-income Maryland students who are enrolled in an institutions of higher education.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors.

**As one of the largest human service providers in Maryland, we work every day with low-income individuals and see firsthand how low-income students struggle to make ends meet.** In particular, we work with low-income students through our Elevate program, which helps to remove barriers to graduation for students who have experienced generational poverty. Food insecurity is just one of many barriers that can impact a student's ability to thrive in higher education. We know that SNAP benefits are vitally important in the effort to assist low-income individuals meet their basic nutritional needs, and that the current federal waivers that allow low-income college students to access SNAP are set to expire.

**Passing HB 452 will ensure that low-income college students have access to the nutrition they need to thrive and successfully complete higher education after federal waivers end.** Creating a dedicated state funding source to ensure that the Maryland students don't lose access to nutritional resources is important, as without state investment, low-income college students will struggle with food insecurity and overall economic security. As a program that works with students to overcome barriers to graduation, when students are food-insure, they are more likely to drop out of school.<sup>1</sup> Improving access to SNAP benefits also benefits our state's local economy and public health: healthy students with secure incomes go into their communities and spend their SNAP benefits at local retailers. Moreover, creating a state SNAP benefit for students will allow them to continue focusing on their education and graduation, building a more economically secure future for themselves and their families.

**On behalf of the individuals and families we work with, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 452.**

Submitted By: Lisa Klingenmaier, Assistant Director of Advocacy

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<sup>1</sup> College Students and SNAP: The New Face of Food Insecurity in the United States. 2019.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6836795/>