

Committees: Appropriations

Testimony on: HB514

Position: Favorable

24 February 2023

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and the members of the Appropriations committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this important piece of legislation. My name is Meghana Kotraiah and I serve as the Speaker of the Legislature for the University of Maryland, College Park Student Government Association (SGA). On behalf of our SGA, I respectfully request a favorable report of House Bill 514 to help combat food insecurity in K-12 students who want to chase their dreams of being college students.

As a college student, I know that the habits I developed as an elementary, middle, and high school student, are ones that have stuck with me as I now live independently. Eating breakfast is imperative to students' success, and developing this habit early despite any financial barriers they may have, sets them up to continue in college.

The State Free Feeding Program is impactful as it provides meals for students who may not be able to have them otherwise. Providing this resource develops the healthy habit of eating nourishing, wholesome, and filling meals that propel students towards overall academic achievement and well-being. Students should be able to focus on school and activities, without fear that they may be facing hunger or food insecurity.

As a student leader, I see many students that skip meals, or do not prioritize their hunger. If they are taught that they deserve and need breakfast from a young age, they will build healthy habits that continue as they pursue their goals. Overall, this legislation would ensure that these programs are able to continue operating, and that students across the state will develop habits that keep them from going hungry.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB514.

Thank you,



*Meghana Kotraiah, Student Government Association Speaker of the
Legislature
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