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BILL NO.: **HB 452**

TITLE: **Food Supplement Benefits – Students – Eligibility (SNAP for Students)**

SPONSOR: Delegate Kaufman

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 21, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 452 – Food Supplement Benefits – Students – Eligibility (SNAP for Students). This legislation would provide food supplement benefits to eligible students enrolled in institutions of higher education.

Food insecurity has significantly impacted communities across the State. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Baltimore County significantly ramped up food distribution, targeting communities located in areas of food insecurity and those that had incurred job or financial losses. Students at higher education institutions can be particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and as food prices climb, the impacts can be exacerbated. Increasingly, students seeking higher education in community college or university programs are dependent on financial assistance to pay for courses, housing, fees, books, and other living expenses. Many find it difficult to work full-time while carrying a full school schedule, and in many university communities, the costs of living can be quite high. As inflation continues to rise, expanding access to food benefits to higher education students may prove critical to those most in need.

Currently, Maryland offers students in primary and secondary education food supplement benefits. House Bill 452 expands access to food supplement benefits to students in higher education institutions who meet an eligible income threshold. If passed, this bill represents an important step towards ensuring that all students are supported in accessing adequate nutrition and eliminating significant barriers for those who struggle to meet their basic needs.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 452. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaisoa@baltimorecountymd.gov.