



Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee
HB 452 Food Supplement Benefits-Students-Eligibility (SNAP for Students)
Position: Favorable

February 21, 2023

The Honorable Ben Barnes Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Room 121, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

cc: Members, Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

We are writing today to testify in support of HB 452. HB 452 builds on the important work that took place in the 2021 session to address the critical, yet often overlooked issue of food insecurity on college campuses. According to a 2019 University of Maryland study, 20% of UMD students surveyed experienced food insecurity in the last 12 months.

An October 2022 [Washington Post](#) article found that nationally as many as 41% of college students report limited or uncertain access to food in the past 30 days. The article also noted that food insecurity does have a disparate impact with Black, first-generation, and two-year college students hardest, widening existing inequalities.

Food insecurity harms students. Hungry students tend to have lower GPAs, higher dropout rates, and are less engaged in campus activities because of low energy levels. Failure to ensure college students have the nutrition needed to pursue their studies is an institutional failure, not a reflection of low-income students.

HB 452 provides a simple solution. HB 452 enables eligible college students to apply for food assistance. The bill is narrowly tailored so it won't be misused by students who don't need this assistance but when passed will provide critically needed assistance to our college students.

Any costs to enact this program are far outweighed by the benefits that accrue

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to individual students who can pursue their studies, to Maryland colleges who will see higher GPAs and graduation rates, and for working families who won't be saddled with the costs of paying off student loans without having gained the benefit of the degree.

For all of these reasons, we support HB 452 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director

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