

House Bill 87

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products House Appropriations Committee January 24, 2023

SUPPORT

House Bill 87 requires the Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver allowing for diapers and menstrual hygiene products to be purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, should such a waiver be made available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that 1 in 3 Marylanders are at risk of facing food insecurity. Food insecurity means a lack of consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day. Some communities and populations are at a higher risk of food insecurity, including families with children. There are food insecure Marylanders in every corner of the state.

Marylanders and their families are being financially squeezed by an affordability crisis for basic household necessities, including food. 30% of Maryland households are currently reporting difficulties affording their usual household expenses, and a troubling 93% of Maryland adults are struggling to cope with all of these price increases. Coupled with the ending of pandemic-era Emergency Allotments, which maxed out SNAP benefits based on household size, Maryland families are truly struggling to get by day-by-day. The Maryland Food Bank does not anticipate this will meaningfully change in the near future, especially for food insecure Marylanders who rely on food assistance benefits such as SNAP to feed themselves and their families.

Any public financial assistance that can be used to ease the burden of rising costs for any household essentials including diapers and menstrual hygiene products should be sought by the state. HB 87 will directly help struggling Maryland families purchase household necessities that are currently left out of assistance programs such as SNAP and WIC. Having to prioritize what to buy for your family is an impossible decision, yet one that too many Marylanders have to make every day. HB 87 is a simple and cost-effective way for the state to help alleviate this burden.

For these reasons, the Maryland Food Bank respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 87.