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MAYOR

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HB0087

January 24, 2023

TO: Members of the Appropriation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 87 – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs – Waiver – Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products

POSITION: Support

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 87.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture may make available to States a waiver extending Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP) benefits to cover diapers and period products. HB87 would allow Maryland to apply for this waiver as soon as it becomes available.

At \$100+/month for diapers and \$20/month for menstrual products, many Baltimore City families—disproportionately those who are Black and Latino—do not have the cash flow to secure the amount of diapers and menstrual products needed to stay clean and healthy. Having to choose between health-related necessities each month is a public health crisis with devastating effects on youth and families. For example, research shows that 4 in 5 teens missed class because they lacked access to period products;ⁱ more than half of parents surveyed at a diaper bank missed work because their baby's daycare required them to send in diapers, which they couldn't afford.ⁱⁱ Thus contributing to ongoing health, educational, and economic disparities based on sex and race.

SNAP is a lifeline for many Baltimore City residents, who comprise one quarter of all households receiving SNAP benefits in Maryland.ⁱⁱⁱ Yet, public and private resources for diapers and menstrual products pale in comparison to food assistance options. This legislation would permit SNAP recipients to allot their benefits to best fit their family's basic material needs each month.

Allowing Maryland to apply for a federal waiver to extend SNAP benefits to diapers and period products may help alleviate our public health crisis; lessen health and economic disparities based on gender and race; and, increase dignity and reduce stress among our citizens. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB87.

ⁱ State of the Period: The widespread impact of period poverty on US students. https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0795/1599/files/State-of-the-Period-white-paper_Thinx_PERIOD.pdf

ⁱⁱ End Diaper Need and Period Poverty: Families Need Cash Assistance to Meet Basic Needs. <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/9-27-21tanf.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Maryland SNAP Households, 2021. (Mar 2022). <https://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/familywelfare/>