

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Testimony by
Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director
February 21, 2023

HB452 – Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students)

POSITION: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, thank Delegate Kaufman for his sponsorship on this legislation that would assure Maryland's students remain eligible for food supplemental assistance.

Most community college students are not recent high school graduates who live in a dormitory, nor are they supported by parents. The vast majority of our student body are nontraditional students, meaning that they fit one of seven criteria: they attend college part-time, are employed full-time, are financially independent, must provide for dependents, are a single parent, do not have a high school diploma or are over the age of 24. Students who meet just one of these criteria are considered nontraditional, however many of these traits are combined. For example, many nontraditional students are single parents and work to support their families.

The Federal Supplemental Nutrition Program does allow for qualifying exceptions that capture our students who are enrolled at least half-time based on factors like employment status, dependents, and eligibility for FAFSA and TANF with some temporary exemptions added in response to COVID-19. This legislation will ensure that eligible students have access to Maryland's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the event federal legislation for eligibility expires.

MACC would like to add a friendly amendment to reduce the requirement from 15 credit hours annually to 12 credit hours annually, aligning to the Pell grant standards for 'half-time' enrollment. This would clarify the definition and allow more students to participate in the program.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, our amendment, and all your efforts to meet the needs of the students we serve. MACC thanks Delegate Kaufman for sponsoring this legislation and asks the Committee to give it a favorable report with amendment.