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BILL NO.: **SB 557**

TITLE: **Primary and Secondary Education – Breakfast and Lunch Programs – Universal Expansion**

SPONSOR: **Senator Guzzone**

COMMITTEE: **Budget and Taxation**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 22, 2023**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 557 – Primary and Secondary Education – Breakfast and Lunch Programs – Universal Expansion. This vital legislation would expand the State Free Feeding Program to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students attending a qualifying school.

No student should be left to attend school on an empty stomach. Students who do not receive proper nutrition generally score lower on exams, struggle more to pay attention in class, and overall experience lower quality of life. Students who cannot afford to purchase breakfast or lunch are left at a significant disadvantage which threatens their ability to perform and break out of the cycle of poverty. As a father and a former educator, Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski is committed to ensuring each and every student has their fundamental needs met.

Senate Bill 557 would significantly expand the availability of free meals to students by requiring that schools which participate in either the federal School Breakfast Program or the National School Lunch program offer free breakfast and lunch to all students at no cost. If passed, this legislation would change the lives of students across the State who struggle with food insecurity. This is a significant step towards eliminating the barriers that keep Maryland’s students from reaching their full potential.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 557. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.