HB0111 – Support
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**Maryland State Legislature
Health and Government Operations Committee**

HB0111SUPPORT
Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Kelly, and Members of the Committee:

No Kid Hungry Maryland writes in support of HB 0111 which will streamline access to benefits based on already-verified eligibility information which is a critical step in reducing the administrative burden on individuals and the state.

Through the No Kid Hungry Maryland campaign, we work with partners, lawmakers, educators, and businesses to identify and eliminate the barriers that may prevent children and families from accessing healthy and nutritious meals. Approximately, 1 in 8 children in Maryland could face hunger this year, and programs like SNAP and school meals play a critical role in reducing food insecurity for children and Maryland families.

The policy outlined in HB 0111 is proven and effective. Using technology and enrollment data across programs is cost saving, improves efficiency, and removes barriers for families tasked to provide very detailed personal financial and household information several times for multiple programs. The Express Lane Eligibility Program is evidence-based, would reduce Maryland's administrative costs of public benefit programs, and is a proven concept already in use in other states, such as South Carolina and Louisiana.

Implementing an Express Lane Eligibility Program for Medicaid based on SNAP income data is a smart decision especially in anticipation of the unwinding of Medicaid when the Public Health Emergency ends. Additionally, enrolling SSI recipients into SNAP based on their income information removes another burden on applicant and case workers determining eligibility. Low-income families and children would also benefit from the information sharing between SNAP, TANF, SSI, and VA benefits for express lane enrollment in fuel and utility assistance programs.

Again, we strongly support HB 0111, which would streamline eligibility determinations by data sharing, increase retention of those eligible for public benefit programs, and has the potential to save Maryland social service agencies millions of dollars.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.