

Hello,

My name is Michelle Douglas and I'm a volunteer with Student Support Network in Baltimore County, specifically Owings Mills High School. I was also a substitute school nurse at many schools in the county. I am here today to advocate for House Bill 628 to provide universal free meals for all children in Maryland Public Schools.

It's easy to judge a family, parents and children. They should spend their money on food, not, not what..... transportation, health care, rent, bills? Let's face it we've all judged someone and really, we have no idea what's going on in their life.

You have the statistics of poverty in our school system in your packet. In my role as both a school nurse and mother, I have seen the effects hunger has on children. As the mother of a "hangry" child, I was able to recognize behaviors that were a direct link to being hungry. I had food to give my child. So many of our children in school get "hangry". They are unable to behave themselves and keep control of their moods and emotions. They are unable to focus on school work or listen to their teachers. We've all been in the situation where we're too hungry to think. There is a solution to preventing that in our schools. Free school meals for all.

Many children come to the school nurse office complaining of issues directly related to hunger....particularly headaches and nausea. I would constantly ask what they had for breakfast or lunch.. "Nothing" was a very frequent answer. "I have no money on my card" was another one. I have personally walked children to the cafeteria and bought them food. How embarrassing must that be?

Hungry children cannot learn.

Hungry children cannot behave.

Hungry children cannot control their emotions.

Can you when you're hungry?

Please support HB 628 to end hunger in Maryland Schools.

"Poverty is a very complicated issue, but feeding a child isn't"