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HB 543 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Seniors - State Supplement
House Appropriations Committee
FAVORABLE
March 6, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jim Campbell, President Emeritus of AARP Maryland, and former member of the Maryland House of Delegates. AARP Maryland advocates on behalf of two million Marylanders 50 and over. I am here to offer AARP's support of HB 543 introduced by Delegate Henson.

HB 543 increases the State supplemental benefit under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to ensure that households with an individual age 62 or older receive a total benefit of \$75 per month.

Maryland Hunger Solution has reported more than 600,000 Marylanders live in poverty. The Food and Research Action Center (FRAC) noted the state has the nation's 7th highest food insecurity rate among seniors.

Last February, according to the Center on Budget and Priorities, SNAP recipients suffered reductions in benefits due to the end of pandemic-related benefits. These benefits previously reduced food insecurity which had reached a two-decade low for families with children. As a result of the cut in the pandemic-related benefits, SNAP households received on average \$95 less per month – though many households suffered even greater losses.

HB 543 will support older citizens who are dealing with inflation, higher utility bills, and especially the increase in food costs. Poor nutrition can lead to health deficiencies and complications for many seniors. We encourage a favorable report on this bill which can help reduce food insecurity and ensure that older citizens have access to healthy and nutritious food.

For these reasons, AARP requests a favorable vote on HB 543 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Seniors - State Supplement. If you have questions or would like follow-up information, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410.302.8451.

