



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

*Alzheimer's
Association,
Maryland Chapters*

*Baltimore Jewish
Council*

Catholic Charities

*Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council*

Church of the Brethren

*Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland*

*Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County*

*Jewish Community
Relations Council of
Greater Washington*

*Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland*

*Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging*

*Maryland Catholic
Conference*

*Mental Health
Association of Maryland*

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

*National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter*

Presbytery of Baltimore

*The Coordinating
Center*

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Testimony in Support of HB 543- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement

Appropriations Committee

March 6, 2024

Support

The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN) is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that supports policies that meet the housing, health and quality of care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN supports House Bill 543 Senate Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee which increases the minimum amount of the state SNAP benefit for households with a family member at least 62 years old from \$40 to \$75 a month.

Many of our seniors are on fixed income and struggle with meeting their basic needs. Nearly one in five low- income seniors in Maryland struggles with hunger, resulting in Maryland having the 8th highest food insecurity rate among low-income seniors. Low-income seniors rely on Maryland's safety-net programs – like SNAP – to supplement their household budgets and purchase the items they need to live a healthy life. Unfortunately, one in five seniors who apply for SNAP in Maryland receive the minimum benefit, an amount that is woefully inadequate for seniors to access proper nutrition.

HB 543 will reduce hunger among all Marylanders by increasing the minimum benefit while also helping the economy. Recipients spend their benefits on food in neighborhood grocery stores, farmers markets, and other local retailers. For every \$5 spent in SNAP benefits \$9 is generated in local economic activity, yielding a strong return on investment.

For the reasons stated above, MSCAN urges a favorable report on HB 543.

Thank you for your consideration.

