



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

Testimony in Support of HB666-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement

Budget and Taxation Committee

February 6, 2024

Support

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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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 666 which repeals the minimum age for SNAP benefits of a household member to qualify and increases the minimum amount of the benefit from the state from \$40 to \$95 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 666 will reduce hunger among all Marylanders by increasing the minimum benefit and taking away the age requirements 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 666.

Thank you for your consideration.

