

UMBC Student Government Association
Senate and Executive Board



Bill: House Bill 407 – Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students)

Committee: Appropriations

Date: March 12, 2024

Position: Favorable

Contact: Jaden Farris, Director of Government Affairs | jfarris1@umbc.edu

Honorable Committee Members:

On behalf of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County Student Government Association (UMBC SGA), I offer this testimony in favor of House Bill 407, which would provide much-needed food assistance to economically disadvantaged students. House Bill 407 is a common-sense solution that would help address food insecurity and support student success and well-being.

Research paints a concerning picture: a recent survey reveals that 32% of first-year college students struggled with food access in the past month. This translates to detrimental effects on their mental and physical health due to food insecurity and unhealthy food choices. Beyond immediate health concerns, food insecurity also hinders success in college. Lack of nutritious foods can lead to decreased energy levels, lack of focus, and overall reduced ability to succeed in their studies (Bruening et al., 2016). By alleviating food insecurity, SNAP benefits can reduce the stress and anxiety associated with obtaining food. This will lead to improved mental health and a decrease in depression, which is often linked to food insecurity.

Furthermore, food insecurity plays a role in student withdrawal from college. Research finds that students who face food insecurity are often forced to prioritize basic needs such as access to food over their education, ultimately leading to a higher risk of dropping out. This challenge is particularly acute for first-generation students, who may lack the established support systems or resources to navigate these difficulties (Wolfson et al., 2022). Addressing food insecurity on college campuses is crucial to improving student outcomes.

The research underscores the urgent need for House Bill 407 to support students facing the challenge of food insecurity. Investing in students' basic needs fosters a learning environment conducive to success. Accordingly, UMBC SGA respectfully urges a **favorable** report on House Bill 407.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jaden Farris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jaden Farris

Director of Government Affairs

UMBC SGA

References

- Bruening, M., Brennhofer, S., van Woerden, I., Todd, M., & Laska, M. (2016). Factors Related to the High Rates of Food Insecurity among Diverse, Urban College Freshmen. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 116(9), 1450–1457. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2016.04.004>
- Wolfson, J. A., Insolera, N., Cohen, A., & Leung, C. W. (2022). The effect of food insecurity during college on graduation and type of degree attained: evidence from a nationally representative longitudinal survey. *Public health nutrition*, 25(2), 389–397. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980021003104>