



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
House Bill 407
Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students)
March 12, 2024
Favorable

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on House Bill 407. The bill requires the Maryland Department of Human Services to provide food supplement benefits to eligible students enrolled in an institution of higher education.

USM comprises 12 distinguished universities and three regional centers with distinct and unique approaches to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore. A range of institutional types complement this geographic diversity. The USM includes land-grant universities, regional universities, and HBCUs, together with universities whose missions focus on online education, professional and graduate education, and environmental education.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's largest domestic food and nutrition assistance program for low-income Americans. SNAP offers funds preloaded on an Electronic Benefits Transfer Card that eligible low-income individuals and families can use to purchase certain foods, including fruits and vegetables, dairy products, bread and cereals, meat, poultry, fish, and other pantry and convenience items, from authorized retailers.

Food insecurity – the lack of reliable access to sufficient quantities of affordable, safe, nutritious food – is a serious problem for many Americans, including young adults across the USM. Growing evidence suggests the potential negative impact on educational success and efforts to mitigate food insecurity among students must remain a top priority. Higher rates of food insecurity for college students have been attributed to the growing population of low-income students, insufficient financial aid, and the fact that many college students are not eligible for SNAP.

For students in Maryland, House Bill 407 would build a permanent state policy change allowing students to apply to SNAP.

The USM respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 407.



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