



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

March 6, 2024

HB 543

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Seniors – State Supplement

House Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of House Bill 543. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state’s second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 543 is legislation aimed at increasing the amount of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits provided to households that include individuals aged 62 and older. This initiative reflects our obligation to care for the most vulnerable members of our society and ensure that all individuals have access to the basic necessities of life, including nutritious food.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program plays a critical role in the lives of many of our senior citizens by providing vital assistance to low-income individuals and families who struggle to afford an adequate diet. However, many older adults face unique challenges that can exacerbate food insecurity, including fixed incomes, rising healthcare costs, and limited access to affordable and nutritious food options.

Increasing SNAP benefits for households with individuals aged 62 and older is a compassionate and just response to the needs of our elderly population. As they age, many older adults experience declining health, mobility limitations, and increased reliance on medications and medical care, all of which can place additional financial strain on already limited budgets. By providing additional assistance through SNAP, we can help alleviate the burden of food insecurity and ensure that older adults have access to the nourishment they need to maintain their health and well-being.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 543.

