



January 16, 2024

Testimony of Laura Hale  
American Heart Association  
**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association extends its support for Senate Bill 35 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement.

Access to nutritious healthy food is essential for long term heart health. Unfortunately, too many Marylanders do not have access to healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, living in food deserts. In these food deserts many Marylanders rely on convenience stores which primarily sell high salt food with low nutritional value. It is difficult, if not an impossible for these Marylanders to regularly get to a supermarket and have healthy foods. As such, Marylanders living in these areas suffer from higher rates of obesity and cardiovascular disease.

Increasing the amount of money each SNAP recipient receives creates the opportunity for more healthy choices and to make sure that families in Maryland are fed.

Funding SNAP is essential for Maryland families and the Heart Association urges a favorable report on SB 35.