



**Witness in FAVOR of SB0035**  
**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement**  
**Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**  
**January 17, 2024**

Prince George's County Food Equity Council  
1401 Mercantile Lane Suite #481  
Largo, MD 20774

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 0035 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement. As staff and members of the Prince George's County Food Equity Council, a local food policy council that helps residents, grow, sell, and choose healthy foods in Prince George's County, MD, we strongly believe in the importance of improving participation in federal nutrition programs and ending hunger in our community.

The recent changes in SNAP regulations have had a significant impact on households and individuals, creating challenges not only for SNAP beneficiaries but also affecting the broader food system. While Maryland Market Money increases the buying power of those using nutrition assistance benefits, participants' funding constraints result in reduced vendor sales for our growers and producers who accept SNAP benefits. The loss of emergency allotments resulted in a considerable reduction in federal dollars entering Maryland, impacting our local economy by an estimated \$105 million each month and over \$1 billion annually.

Our organization has observed the repercussions of these changes firsthand. We've received messages from families struggling to navigate the sudden shift in benefits and heard from local food pantries that their client numbers have skyrocketed. Many residents depend on food banks and pantries to feed their families and/or use credit cards to buy groceries, digging themselves deeper into debt. These challenges, combined with inflation and rising grocery prices, have exacerbated the situation.

Drawing from the experiences of other states grappling with similar issues, we believe it is crucial for Maryland to take action. With Congress unable to pass a Farm Bill in 2022, other states have begun taking action to help remedy this hunger cliff. Massachusetts, immediately following the loss of emergency allotments, provided households with 40% of their maximum allotment for 3 months. The District of Columbia recently passed and funded Give SNAP A Raise, which will increase each SNAP household's monthly benefit by 10%. New Jersey increased the minimum benefit for households to \$50 in 2021 and further increased it to \$95 a month in 2023. Maryland can and should join other states in addressing SNAP benefit adequacy



by boosting the minimum benefit. By enacting Senate Bill 0035, Maryland can demonstrate its commitment to addressing food insecurity and supporting a proven program that helps lift families out of poverty.

In conclusion, we respectfully urge your favorable consideration for SB 0035. Thank you for your time and dedication to addressing the critical issue of food insecurity in our state.

Sincerely,

*Heaven Jordan*

Heaven Jordan  
Prince George's County Food Equity Council