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**HB 666 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement
FAVORABLE
House Appropriations Committee
Wednesday, January 17, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jim Campbell, President Emeritus of AARP Maryland and former member of the Maryland House of Delegates. I am here to offer AARP's support of HB 666 introduced by Delegates Shetty, Edelson, Kaufman, and Solomon

HB 666 expands eligibility for State-provided supplemental benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It repeals the minimum age a household member must be to receive this benefit and increases the amount of the supplemental benefits that the State must provide from \$40 to \$95.

Maryland Hunger Solution has reported more than 600,000 Marylanders live in poverty. The Food and Research Action Center (FRAC) noted the state has the nation's 7th highest food insecurity rate among seniors.

Last February, according to the Center on Budget and Priorities, SNAP recipients suffered reductions in benefits due to the end of pandemic-related benefits. These benefits previously reduced food insecurity which had reached a two-decade low for families with children. As a result of the cut in the pandemic-related benefits, SNAP households received on average \$95 less per month – though many households suffered even greater losses.

HB 666 will support older citizens who are dealing with inflation, higher utility bills, and especially the increase in food costs. Poor nutrition can lead to health deficiencies and complications for many seniors. We encourage a favorable report on this bill which can help reduce food insecurity and ensure that older citizens have access to healthy and nutritious food.

For these reasons, AARP requests a favorable vote on HB 666 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – State Supplement. If you have questions or would like follow-up information, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410.302.8451.

