



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

February 8, 2024

SB 213

Human Services – Food Supplement Program (Summer SNAP for Children Act)

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 213. 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.

Senate Bill 213 provides additional, state-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to families who both currently receive federal SNAP benefits and have a child or children under the age of nineteen still in the household. Currently, each household receives an additional benefit of \$30 per child per month during the summer months and an additional \$10 per child in December. This bill provides crucial funding for this effort, increasing the current minimum allocation of \$200,000 to \$5,000,000.

The Conference consistently supports legislation that upholds the needs of families, especially when the efforts are focused on alleviating the effects of poverty felt by the most vulnerable in our state. Senate Bill 213 provides modest monthly food benefit coverage during the times when a child is not in school, such as summer vacation and winter break. Often for families facing elevated levels of poverty, schools play an outsized role in providing healthy meals for children, and sometimes are the only meals that a child will get in a day. The parts of the year where not only are children not receiving meals at school but also families have additional mouths to feed are an enormous financial burden, and Senate Bill 213 aims to ease this struggle.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 213.