



SB 213 - Human Services – Food Supplement Program (Summer SNAP for Children Act)

Finance Committee

February 8, 2024

SUPPORT

Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 213. This bill ensures children and their families who utilize SNAP benefits have reliable and year-round access to food.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

Prosperity Now's most recent scorecard for Maryland shows that at least one fifth of Marylanders struggle to pay for basic expenses, 20.2% of Maryland households experience income volatility, and 26.7% had difficulty paying for usual household expenses¹. Programs like Summer SNAP are essential for low-income families with children to provide consistent access to food. The research demonstrates that access to Summer SNAP for children decreases the prevalence of severe food insecurity by one-third.

The Summer SNAP for Children Act passed by the General Assembly in 2019 ([HB 338/ SB 218](#)) helps low-income families who are food insecure to stay healthy and productive. Currently, the Governor must include at least \$200,000 in the annual budget for this program. SB 213 will increase that amount to \$5,000,000. This increase is necessary because it is unlikely that all eligible children in a county will be able to receive the supplemental benefit with the current appropriation. This means that counties will need to choose which families will receive the benefit.

We have seen that SNAP not only lifts low-income households out of poverty, but it also supports the local and national economy. According to a 2019 report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, every \$1 in SNAP benefits can contribute to the Gross National Product by up to \$1.50². This means that SB 213 would both further the economic well-being of individual Marylanders as well as the state GDP as a whole.

Enacting SB 213 would give counties the flexibility to provide summer SNAP for more low-income families that need it. It also gives the Department of Human Services more flexibility on when the benefit is given.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 213.

¹ Prosperity Now Scorecard: <https://scorecard.prosperitynow.org/reports#report-state-profile/24>

² USDA: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2019/july/quantifying-the-impact-of-snap-benefits-on-the-u-s-economy-and-jobs/>