



BILL: House Bill 1090 – Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

HEARING DATE: February 18, 2025

POSITION: FAVORABLE

CONTACT: Jaden Farris, Director of Government Relations, jfarris1@umbc.edu

The University System of Maryland Student Councils (USMSC) represents over 170,000 undergraduate and graduate students across the University System of Maryland's 12 institutions and 3 regional higher education centers. As such, we are in full support of House Bill 1090.

Research paints a concerning picture. A [2024 report](#) from the Government Accountability Office revealed nearly 3.8 million college students may face food insecurity. This translates to detrimental effects on their mental and physical health due to food insecurity and unhealthy food choices. Beyond immediate health concerns, food insecurity also hinders success in college. Lack of nutritious foods can lead to decreased energy levels, lack of focus, and overall reduced ability to succeed in their studies ([Bruening et al., 2016](#)). SNAP benefits alleviate food insecurity and thus reduce the stress and anxiety associated with obtaining food. This will lead to improved student mental health.

Furthermore, food insecurity contributes to student withdrawal from college. Research finds that students who face food insecurity are often forced to prioritize basic needs, such as access to food, over their education, ultimately leading to a higher risk of dropping out. This challenge is particularly acute for first-generation students, who may lack the established support systems or resources to navigate these difficulties ([Wolfson et al., 2022](#)). Addressing food insecurity on college campuses is crucial to improving student outcomes.

While we acknowledge the state's budget challenges, ensuring students have access to basic necessities must remain a priority. Investing now will pay dividends in the long term by improving graduation rates, retention, and overall success — contributing to a stronger workforce and economy in the future.

The research underscores the need for House Bill 1090. Investing in students' basic needs fosters a learning environment conducive to success. For these reasons, the University System of Maryland Student Council respectfully urges a **favorable committee report**.



usmd.edu/usmsc



usmsc-officers@usmd.edu



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