



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

February 18, 2025

The Honorable Ben Barnes, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB1090 - FOOD SUPPLEMENT BENEFITS - STUDENTS -
ELIGIBILITY - POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the opportunity to provide favorable testimony with the sponsor amendments on House Bill 1090 (HB 1090).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Family Investment Administration (FIA) administers food supplement benefits through the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is impacted by HB 1090. The bill incorporates into state law current federal regulations on SNAP eligibility for Maryland college students who meet specific work-study criteria. This bill would require Maryland to exercise those federal flexibilities. DHS recognizes the growing issue of food insecurity in Maryland and is committed to collaborating with the bill sponsor to improve awareness and access to federal nutrition assistance for eligible students.

HB 1090, as currently written, does not change SNAP eligibility for students but reaffirms existing federal flexibilities to increase awareness and participation. We are committed to implementing state-level SNAP policy changes to meet the bill's goals, with or without legislative action.

We thank Delegate Solomon and his office for their collaboration on the sponsor amendments. We plan to update our SNAP Manual as discussed with Delegate Solomon. It is an excellent opportunity to improve participation among eligible students in line with current federal guidance. The proposed amendments would

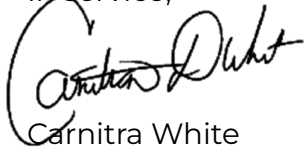
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allow students to demonstrate an average of 20 hours of work per week over a quarter, benefiting students by assessing work requirements over a longer period of time. Our updates will clarify federal Work-Study participation, ensuring students and institutions understand eligibility. We aim to publish the updated Manual by June 1, 2025.

The bill currently conflates two separate student regulatory flexibilities. As written, students would qualify for SNAP if they participate in Federal Work Study and if they meet specific work requirements. However, under federal regulations 7 CFR 273.5(b)(5-6) students are eligible if they meet one of these criteria. DHS agrees with the clarifying sponsor amendments. We also believe clarifying language is needed to replace the phrase “food supplement benefits” with the name of the federally funded program “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.”

We appreciate the opportunity to provide favorable testimony with the sponsor’s amendments to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. We look forward to the decision of the Committee and welcome continued collaboration on HB 1090. If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carnitra White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Carnitra White
Principal Deputy Secretary