



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Gloria Brown Burnett, Interim Secretary

March 19, 2026

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

RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 1458 - STATE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLEES - ESTABLISHMENT - POSITION: INFORMATION

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully submits this information on House Bill 1458 (HB 1458).

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) implements the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that expands food access to eligible Maryland households. HB 1458 is meant to address populations of Marylanders who may be food insecure and otherwise qualify for assistance, but were removed from eligibility for SNAP by US [House Resolution 1 \(H.R.1 2025\)](#).

Like the sponsors of HB 1458, DHS is concerned about the increased risk of food insecurity among humanitarian immigrants resulting from H.R.1. In response, we implemented a coordinated, multi-pronged strategy to support refugees impacted by the loss of SNAP eligibility. Recognizing that no single resource can fully replace SNAP, DHS is maximizing all available federal, state, and private funding streams to stabilize food access for affected households. This includes close coordination with resettlement agencies and community partners to rapidly deploy alternative supports. Our actions include leveraging private donations for direct grocery assistance and using Refugee Support Services funding to provide short-term food assistance through structured case management.

In parallel, DHS is strengthening community-based food access by connecting families to WIC, food banks, pantries, and culturally appropriate meal delivery services. These efforts are complemented by a continued focus on employment and self-sufficiency pathways to promote long-term stability. Additionally, we are working closely with resettlement agencies to support eligible refugees in adjusting to Lawful Permanent Resident status, which will help restore their access to SNAP benefits over time.


While available resources remain limited and cannot fully offset the loss of SNAP, this integrated approach reflects our commitment to mitigating hardship and ensuring continuity of support for vulnerable refugee populations.

HB 1458 would establish a new State SNAP for Refugees and Asylees administered by FIA. The purpose of the proposed State SNAP for Refugees and Asylees is to expand food access to households that were eligible for federal SNAP benefits under the requirements in effect on July 3, 2025, prior to the passage of H.R.1. At that time, thousands of asylees and refugees throughout Maryland received federally-funded SNAP benefits. Given an average of \$180 per person per month in benefits, the State SNAP for Refugees and Asylees would require approximately \$20 million per fiscal year in state general funds, since federal funds may no longer be used to provide SNAP benefits to this population. We anticipate that costs will fluctuate in response to federal refugee admissions policies, decreasing during periods of more restrictive admissions and increasing when policies expand access.

Given the significant uncertainty in federal policy and the escalating fiscal shortfalls forecasted through FY 2028, DHS urges caution against legislation that increases expenditures or diverts revenue without sustainable funding offsets. In light of the current fiscal crisis, the state must remain disciplined and strategic in its funding decisions to protect essential services for all Marylanders.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer this information to the committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at justin.hayes1@maryland.gov.

In service,



Gloria Brown Burnett
Interim Secretary