



**HB 1458 - State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Refugees and Asylees -
Establishment
House Appropriations Committee
March 19, 2026
SUPPORT**

Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1458. This bill establishes a critical state-level safety net to ensure that refugees, asylees, and other eligible noncitizens can continue to access food assistance, even as federal policies shift.

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.**

Recent federal proposals, including H.R. 1, have introduced or signaled significant restrictions on eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for certain immigrant populations. These changes are cutting access to essential food assistance for individuals who were previously eligible under longstanding federal law. Refugees and asylees have fled violence, persecution, and instability. This community losing access to SNAP will be immediate and severe.

Refugees and asylees often arrive in the United States with limited financial resources, no established credit, and significant barriers to employment, including language access, credential recognition, and the need to stabilize their families. Even under the best circumstances, the first several years of resettlement are marked by financial instability. The sudden loss of food assistance during this period increases hardship and is destabilizing.

SNAP plays a foundational role in helping families meet their basic needs while they work toward long-term self-sufficiency. It allows households to redirect limited income toward rent, transportation, childcare, and other essentials that support economic mobility. Without this support, families are more likely to face impossible tradeoffs between food and other necessities, increasing the risk of housing instability, debt, and long-term financial insecurity.

HB 1458 ensures continuity and stability by maintaining access to food assistance based on eligibility standards that were in place as of July 3, 2025. By doing so, Maryland can protect vulnerable residents from abrupt federal changes and uphold its commitment to supporting families on a path toward

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stability and independence. This bill is not only about food access; it is about economic stability, public health, and ensuring that all Marylanders have the opportunity to build secure and productive lives.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 1458.

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