

April 1, 2020

Maryland Representative
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Maryland Representative,

We are writing in support of a sign-on letter being circulated by House Rules Committee Chair Jim McGovern (D-MA) asking House and Senate leadership to prioritize the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in upcoming stimulus packages and include the following three priorities:

1. Increase the maximum SNAP benefit by 15 percent;
2. Increase the minimum monthly SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$30; and
3. Place a hold on harmful rules proposed by the Executive Branch that weaken SNAP eligibility and benefits.

SNAP has long played a vital role in reducing food insecurity and lifting more people out of poverty than any other assistance program. It is crucial that during this time of uncertainty, supports are put in place to meet the increased need caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before Governor Hogan's "stay-at-home" mandate, social distancing recommendations and the closure of non-essential businesses has left many Marylanders without work. Although food retailers remain open, individual and families that have suddenly found themselves without an income are struggling to keep food on the table in a time when nutrition is more important than ever to maintain health and well-being. As we have continued our work here in Maryland with SNAP outreach and application assistance, we have witnessed firsthand the rise in application numbers as more and more Marylanders are forced to rely on federal assistance programs to meet their basic needs.

By increasing the maximum SNAP benefit by 15 percent and raising the minimum benefit from \$16 to \$30, not only will the well-being of our most vulnerable residents be protected during this public health crisis, but it will be a critical investment in Maryland's economy. Research shows that during an economic downturn, each \$1 of SNAP benefits leads to between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in total economic activity. In addition, because Maryland is already using state funds to raise the minimum SNAP benefit to \$30 for seniors, this decision on the federal level would result in hundreds of dollars in savings for the state.

USDA's SNAP rules will severely limit states' abilities to effectively and efficiently connect people to the assistance they need. While these rules would be damaging at any time, they are exceptionally harmful now and should be held in abeyance during the emergency.

We respectfully urge you to join the sign-on letter to ensure that Marylanders have access to the support and nutrition they need to endure through this uncertain time. Please respond by using [THIS FORM](#) by 12p this Friday, 4/3. If you have questions, please contact Drea Shropshire in Rep. McGovern's office at Saundrea.Shropshire@mail.house.gov.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Maryland Hunger Solutions