



May 14, 2020

The Honorable Member of Congress
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of Maryland Hunger Solutions, we are writing in strong support for the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act, H.R. 6800, which aims to stabilize the economy and lessen the hardships currently faced by individuals and communities around the country by bolstering critical federal assistance programs, such as SNAP, WIC, and Pandemic EBT, as well as providing much needed economic relief to state and local governments.

As the COVID-19 emergency continues to impact local communities, additional response efforts are critical. It has become more apparent than ever that the economic impacts of the pandemic will last far beyond the mandated business closures and “stay at home” orders. SNAP application rates continue to rise [exponentially](#) as food insecurity remains a constant concern among families facing unemployment, children who lost access to school meals, older adults with health concerns, and countless others. The HEROES Act will provide much needed relief to these struggling Marylanders by addressing these critical SNAP enhancements:

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.

By integrating these important protections, the HEROES Act will be making a critical investment in the 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, the HEROES Act will expand funding to state and local governments to address the growing revenue shortfalls resulting from COVID-19 related response spending. After schools were mandated to close, school district Food and Nutrition Service Departments were among the first to act and continue to be a crucial community resource for low-income and newly struggling families in need of additional nutrition assistance. Unfortunately, the cost of emergency operations has left many districts with a growing debt. Without the additional financial support of the HEROES Act, this strain could cause damaging budget cuts that will only further harm the families and communities relying on these services.

We firmly believe that these provisions included in the HEROES Act will have an important impact on lessening the severity and duration of the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. As such, we respectfully urge you to support the HEROES Act this Friday to provide relief that is urgently needed across the state of Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael J. Wilson Julia Gross
mjwilson@mdhungersolutions.org jgross@mdhungersolutions.org

Maryland Hunger Solutions