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Ways and Means Committee

Education Subcommittee

Election Law Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

September 20, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
800 9th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Secretary Perdue:

We, the undersigned Maryland lawmakers, respectfully request that the Trump Administration allow the Broad Based Categorical Eligibility option of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to remain in place. Specifically, our request pertains to Docket ID Number [FNS-2018-0037], "Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance."

Many working families in Maryland who are eligible for assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) also benefit from SNAP support. If the proposed rule change is implemented, food will be taken off of the tables of these families, increasing rates of hunger and food insecurity and harming children, seniors, and people with disabilities, among others. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that this proposed rule would eliminate critical food assistance for 9% of SNAP users. In Maryland, that equates to 55,044 people. We write to emphasize the significant harm that removing food assistance from these Marylanders would cause.

Furthermore, this rule change will contribute to increased rates of illness and poverty in our state. If this rule is implemented, it will limit the ability of working people to build savings and plan for their future. Under current SNAP requirements, any time they build up more than \$2,250 in savings or up to \$3,500 for households with elderly or people with disabilities, they will lose their SNAP benefits. At the same time, a large body of research confirms children in families who receive SNAP benefits are more likely to be healthy and avoid hospitalization than comparable children who do not receive benefits. We support the ability of Marylanders to work and save for their future and the future of their family without incurring additional food and healthcare costs.

Additionally, children in Maryland are automatically eligible for free breakfast and lunch due to their family's participation in SNAP. If thousands of Maryland families are unable to receive SNAP benefits and required to apply for Free and Reduced Meals benefits individually, many children will fall through the cracks and the children will suffer the consequences. Because this rule would prevent

children from receiving healthy school meals and healthy meals at home, students' health and learning would be at risk.

Lastly, we underscore the harm that this rule change would have on the Maryland economy. Grocery retailers and agricultural producers depend on SNAP dollars and cutting that funding will limit their ability to produce food and serve our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Members of the Maryland House of Delegates, listed below.

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