



Advocates for Children and Youth improves the lives and experiences of Maryland's children and youth by advancing policies and programs across multiple issue areas that tackle racial disparities and improve outcomes to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

In SUPPORT

House Bill 338 – Summer SNAP for Children

January 29, 2019

Advocates for Children and Youth supports House Bill 338, which would provide an additional grocery benefit for low-income families during the summer months.

339,411 households in Maryland participated in SNAP in FY2018. In FY2016, that equaled 744,343 individuals. During the school year, these households receive assistance through breakfast and lunch programs at schools. But when school is out, too often children go hungry as existing summer meals programs meet only a fraction of the need. HB 338 would help close this gap, ensuring more of Maryland's children have consistent access to nutritious meals.

Access to healthful and nutritious food is vital for the development of children. Studies have shown that children with access to nutritious food exhibit fewer behavioral problems, can better participate in school, and have better overall academic outcomes. Additionally, adequate nutrition through nutrition programs can be fundamental for growth and development, particularly during early childhood years.

Investing in the health of our children is also an investment in the economy. When families get the nutrition they need through programs like Summer SNAP for Children, fewer children face food insecurity, which leads to a reduction in the health care costs associated with hunger. In addition, every \$1 in SNAP investments generates, on average, \$1.80 in local economic activity; for example, a \$2 million investment would lead to an additional \$3.58 million in local economic activity in the state.

House Bill 338 would help combat the food insecurity faced by too many Marylanders every summer. We urge a favorable vote.