



March 2, 2021

Members of the Appropriation Committee,

Division of Student Affairs
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs at Towson University includes the Office of Case Management which provides outreach, support, and advocacy for our students. We assist students in navigating difficult situations that would otherwise impact their education. These difficulties include all manner of challenges--everything from mental health and bereavement to homelessness and financial literacy. Food insecurity is one of the most prevalent yet overlooked issues facing this generation of learners and has only increased since the COVID-19 Pandemic. Most would agree food is a fundamentally basic human need and assume students attending university do not go hungry however, this is not the case.

Unfortunately for many students, food expenditures often suffer when considering a monthly budget. At a minimum, the cost of attending college includes the price of tuition and books but for many students, especially those who support themselves, there are other expenses such as housing, transportation, and medical costs. At the end of the month when all those bills are due, we often work with students who have skipped several meals in order to afford their rent.

Even if the most conservative estimates are true, 1 in 5 college students experience food insecurity. The proposed bill would not only offer monetary support to those of us combating the issue but also create a state recognized baseline for success. While it is our hope that many institutions will aim to exceed that baseline, the recognition and awareness offered by this bill would be a monumental step forward.

If passed, the proposed bill would directly benefit many of the students that we have had the privilege of serving. This bill would help the mother who went back to school so she could provide more for her family, support the first generation student who worked two jobs during the day so they could attend nursing school at night, and even support the student who earned a scholarship to a nationally ranked program, but struggled to afford regular and nutritious meals. In short, supporting this bill means supporting the people who are working hard to improve their future and the future of everyone living in Maryland. Thank you for your consideration, and we respectfully request a favorable report on HB 0891.

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