



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN
Governor

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD
Lieutenant Governor

DAVID R. BRINKLEY
Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

HOUSE BILL 891 Higher Education – Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program – Established (D. Davis)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: March 11, 2021

COMMITTEE: House Appropriations

SUMMARY OF BILL: HB 891 mandates an annual appropriation in the amount of \$150,000 to establish grants to higher education institutions and community colleges for the purpose of addressing student hunger. Some of the strategies include providing a food pantry, establishing a meal-sharing program (unused meal plan credits), and assisting students in accessing SNAP benefits. The colleges match the grant amount.

EXPLANATION: The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the annual \$150,000 mandated appropriation.

DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which requires spending allocations for FY 2022 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2020.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19, making revenue predictions for the remainder of FY 2021 and FY 2022 highly volatile. Many individuals and households are unemployed or underemployed, with many industry sectors operating at much less than 100% capacity. Federal stimulus programs are providing much needed relief, but the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability.

The General Assembly and Administration have successfully enacted the Governor's emergency Recovery for the Economy, Livelihoods, Industries, Entrepreneurs, and Families Act (SB 496 RELIEF Act), which provides \$1.1 billion in direct stimulus and tax relief for Maryland working families, small businesses, and those who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is incumbent upon us to allow the impact of this unprecedented relief package on the State's economy to take effect. Further mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of an ongoing pandemic.

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