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Budget and Taxation Committee
Capital Budget Subcommittee
Health and Human Services Subcommittee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes on Senate Bill 763

Bill Title: The Health Food Accountability Act of 2021

Hearing Date: March 5, 2021 - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair: The Honorable Paul Pinsky; Vice Chair: The Honorable Cheryl Kagan

I write to you today in **support** of Senate Bill 763. It is estimated that that food insecurity threatens nearly one in nine Maryland – including one in seven children. Despite our State being ranked the wealthiest, In 2021, residents, especially those in rural and urban areas, still face difficulties in accessing fresh and healthy food. All Marylanders, no matter what zip code they live in, should have access to fresh and affordable food.

The Healthy Food Accountability Act of 2021 would benefit low-income, priority funding areas that have limited access to healthy food by providing incentives to new supermarkets and grocery stores that provide food services in underserved communities. This Bill would establish a certain exception to the prohibition against issuing certain alcoholic beverages licenses for use in conjunction with or on the premises of grocery stores and supermarkets. It would require for local licensing boards to issue Class A beer or beer and wine licenses to said establishments. Applicants for licensure would be required to pay appropriate annual fees to the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission, which shall be empowered to distribute the proceeds of fees to the Community Legacy Financial Assistance Fund.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the majority of American adults are now obese or overweight. Our children are on par. Obesity-related conditions make-up several leading causes of death, including heart disease and strokes. The availability and affordability of healthy food can be a tool in addressing this obesity epidemic.

In efforts to improve health outcomes and address disparities in our neighborhoods, we hope that you will move for a **favorable** report of Senate Bill 763.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cory V. McCray'.

Cory V. McCray
State Senator