

**Committees:** Education, Energy and the Environment

**Testimony on:** SB353 Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program

**Position:** Favorable

20 February 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and the members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

My name is Virti Choksi and I am part of The University of Maryland, College Park's club, Terps Against Hunger. I am testifying today in support of SB353, which expands the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program. This bill is important because there are many students on campus that experience hunger and food insecurity on a daily basis. Being part of the Terps Against Hunger club has shown me firsthand that there are numerous students as well as community members that are food insecure. We have seen alarming statistics in Prince George's County and College Park, MD that highlight the number of people that go hungry (around 14% of the population).

Our mission in the club is to reduce the number of community members experiencing this issue by holding meal-packing events. Our most recent event was at IKEA and included community volunteers that worked to package around 17,000 meals. However, there is still a great need for more to be done as there are a lot of people that visit the food pantry located on UMD's campus. Due to this continued need, we also recently held a food drive to donate non-perishable food to the campus pantry. According to UMD Dining Services, There have been 16,000 visits to the Campus Pantry since 2014 – more than half of which were made during or after March 2020.

I respectfully request a favorable report on SB353.

Thank you,



*Virti Choksi, Community Education Chair for Terps Against Hunger  
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