

Committees: Education, Energy and the Environment
Testimony on: SB353 Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program
Position: Favorable

16 February 2023

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

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports SB353 that beginning in fiscal year 2025 allocates \$1,500,000 to the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, increasing the capacity of institutions and centers to implement the program.

This bill ensures that all college students, regardless of their background or financial situation, have access to basic needs like food. By funding programs such as Swipe Out Hunger and SNAP enrollment opportunities, and increasing funding for on-campus food pantries, we are providing a level playing field for all students to succeed. This is an investment into Maryland's future. We are filling the stomachs, hearts, and minds of our friends and families; our loved ones and our community.

One day, a friend told me about the food pantry on campus. When I finally worked up the courage to visit, the staff was incredibly welcoming and non-judgmental. They provided me with enough food to get through the week, including fresh produce, canned goods, and some personal hygiene items. It is a lifesaver for students. Very specifically, food pantries save the life of a student each week. I can not even begin to express how much it means for our community to have access to nutritious and healthy food. The food pantry not only helps our society to survive, but it also gives us a sense of hope that we can continue our education and achieve our goals. I urge you to support this bill and provide funding to expand food pantry and other food security programs on college campuses across the state. No student should have to choose between paying for textbooks or buying food. We need your support to ensure that all students have access to the basic necessities of life. Thank you.

I respectfully request a favorable vote on SB353.

Thank you,



Gannon Sprinkle
Student Government Association
University of Maryland — College Park,
gsprinkl@terpmail.umd.edu

