



March 16, 2023

**2023 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
SB0787: Benefits Cliff Pilot Program**

BILL: SB0787: Human Services - Benefits Cliff Pilot Program - Establishment
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0787
BILL ANALYSIS: Establishing the Benefits Cliff Pilot Program in the Department of Human Services to mitigate the cliff effect and increase workforce participation by Pilot Program participants; and requiring the Department to convene a certain stakeholder support group.

Dear Chair Griffith and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill to establish the Benefits Cliff Pilot Program to help mitigate the cliff effect from the loss of public benefits.

The Montgomery County Food Council serves as an authorized community benefit organization within the State of Maryland, and we work directly with SNAP recipients to help them enroll for their benefits. We have a unique perspective on the importance of SNAP support, and how that support can disappear with small increases in monthly earnings. The impact of the drop in benefits can force people to decide between increasing their income and being able to provide food for their families. This can disincentivize SNAP participants from additional participation in the labor force, and we support that this pilot program seeks to mitigate that effect.

The creation of the Benefits Cliff Pilot Program will reduce the impact of cliff effects across public benefit programs for pilot participants. This program will provide funding to people as they join the workforce to mitigate the impact of the loss of benefits. This legislation will include case management for pilot program participants, a peer support group, and technical support services including counseling, mentoring, and financial wellness education. The legislation includes a report of findings at the conclusion of the pilot program to assess impacts on workforce participation and participant benefits. **For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports SB0787 and urges a FAVORABLE REPORT for this bill.**

The Montgomery County Food Council is a nonprofit organization that serves as the primary connection point



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for businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and residents around food system issues in our County. We bring together over 2,000 local and regional partners in community-wide education, advocacy, and capacity building initiatives. Our work cultivates a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system by enhancing food access for the over 100,000 at risk for hunger, expanding food education opportunities for all residents, supporting our County's farms and food and beverage businesses, and addressing the impact of local food production, distribution, consumption and recycling on our natural resources

For more information, please contact Massa Cressall, Interim Executive Director, at the email and phone number below.



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