



Maryland Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger and promoting well-being

Testimony in Support of HB 66 Human Services – No Wrong Door Pilot Program

House Appropriations Committee
February 3, 2015

Maryland Hunger Solutions strongly supports HB 66, which allows low-income residents expanded access to vital health and social services. HB 66 enables organizations to conduct more efficient outreach to connect low-income residents to multiple safety net programs.

HB 66 is an innovative model that makes access to healthcare and social services more efficient.

There are a wide variety of programs to assist people experiencing poverty. These programs encompass a spectrum of vital needs creating a critical economic and social safety net. Unfortunately, our current system is fragmented and complex. For the 585,000¹ Marylanders who live below the federal poverty line, the current system presents real challenges to accessing the life-saving services they need.

These services include anti-hunger programs like the ones Maryland Hunger Solutions works with on a regular basis, but also includes health care, housing, energy assistance, and many others. Currently, we are authorized by the Department of Human Resources and the United States Department of Agriculture to assist Marylanders to ascertain if they are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and if so, to assist them in applying. We are *not* able to assist them in applying to any other program while they are with us, even if they are likely eligible and could use the same personal and financial information. This is inefficient and burdensome to the applicant, to outreach organizations like ours, and to the state government.

HB 66 streamlines the safety net through a comprehensive approach to outreach and benefit

enrollment. HB 66 will enable outreach organizations to respond with holistic, rather than piecemeal, outreach strategies for those living in or near poverty. This translates to a more simplified approach to outreach and more thorough benefit applications—a change that benefits beneficiaries and direct-service providers alike.

Ending poverty in Maryland will require a multi-pronged approach to address the profusion of needs of our state's most vulnerable residents and HB 66 will serve as an innovative tool to maximize the impact of these essential, life-saving programs.

Maryland Hunger Solutions appreciates your consideration, and respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 66.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Wilson, Director
Maryland Hunger Solutions

Maryland Hunger Solutions is a state-wide organization working to end hunger, promote nutrition, and improve well-being for Marylanders in need through education, advocacy, outreach and collaboration.

Maryland Hunger Solutions focuses on improving and increasing participation in federal nutrition programs to ensure that everyone has access to adequate healthy food every day.

ⁱ Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013,
http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_1YR_S0201&prodType=table
