



Maryland Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger and promoting well-being

Testimony in Support of SB 332 Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
February 12, 2014

Maryland Hunger Solutions strongly supports SB 332, which expands access to prekindergarten to 4 year olds whose families live at or below 300% of the federal poverty level.

Prekindergarten programs increase access to healthy foods

Maryland Hunger Solutions works to fight hunger and improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of children and families in Maryland. Hunger is a symptom of poverty and 14% of the children in our state live below the poverty line¹. By increasing the number of children in prekindergarten programs, we also increase access to healthy school meals.

Prekindergarten programs improve public health

Increasing access to quality prekindergarten programs is one of the key policy interventions that have been shown to reduce health inequalities².

Prekindergarten programs are a wise investment

Research has shown that the benefits to participating in prekindergarten continue throughout one's lifetime. The academic enrichment that the children receive is clearly tied to these children earning higher incomes, being more likely to graduate from high school, and being more likely to own their own homes³. The benefits to society also include an impressive "return on investment" for prekindergarten program funding⁴. For every dollar spent on prekindergarten programs, between \$3-\$10 is saved, with 75% of this savings occurring during the child's K-12 education⁵

This is an important foundation in Maryland's leadership in education. We urge a favorable report for this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Wilson, Director
Maryland Hunger Solutions

¹ <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#MD/2/0>

² http://www.jointcenter.org/sites/default/files/upload/research/files/40925_JCBaltimoreReport.pdf

³ <https://www.nea.org/home/18163.htm>

⁴ http://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications_papers/pub_display.cfm?id=3832

⁵ <https://standleadershipcenter.org/sites/standleadershipcenter.org/files/media/WWSF-PreKindergarten.pdf>