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Tuesday, November 17, 2025

**Resolution to approve Special Appropriations to the FY26 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government: Community Grants Non-Departmental Account, \$2,250,000 (Source of Funds: General Fund Undesignated Reserves); Economic Development Fund, \$500,000 (Source of Funds: General Fund Undesignated Reserves); Department of Health and Human Services, \$1,500,000 (Source of Funds: General Fund Undesignated Reserves); and Office of Food System Resilience, \$3,500,000 (Source of Funds: General Fund Undesignated Reserves)**

President Stewart and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

I am Joseph Liu, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy at the Capital Area Food Bank. We are the backbone of the charitable food assistance network in the entire metropolitan area. Despite the tremendous economic strength within Montgomery County, 35% of residents are food insecure according to our latest Hunger Report. By combining resources from the Office of Food Systems Resilience and the Department of Health and Human Services we deliver nearly 20 million meals to your constituents. We do this through a network of over 50 Montgomery community-based organizations – groups such as Manna Food Center, the Upcounty Hub, Gaithersburg Cares, and Nourish Now.

We want to express our thanks to the Council for this important Special Appropriation in response to unprecedented reductions-in-force, disruptions in SNAP food assistance, and the extended federal government shutdown. Unfortunately, the federal government has become an increasingly unreliable partner in our efforts to stamp out hunger in every community. Your leadership is a beacon in these difficult times. We are proud to work in partnership with the Council and the County Executive and the Office of Food Systems Resilience.

We plan to use the additional resources you are giving to us at the Capital Area Food Bank to strengthen our distribution partners – local community-based organizations that take the food from our warehouse and put it in the hands of our neighbors. We have already made nearly \$1.5 million in sub-grants to our partners using state emergency resources this month. The \$750,000 to the Capital Area Food Bank in the Special Appropriation will be used to 1) strengthen key community-based food assistance organizations that work in partnership with the County's Department of Health and Human Services, 2) provide more

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produce to Montgomery seniors served by My Groceries to Go!, and 3) open a Silver Market in the county to offer seniors a new option for accessing high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables. In conjunction with the OFSR and strategic partners such as Manna, the County is implementing a truly holistic response.

This year the Capital Area Food Bank's operations have been pushed to the limit. We opened special distributions for impacted federal workers and contractors in the spring as DOGE took away their badges. This month, we opened more distributions for unpaid and furloughed workers. We even brought truckloads of groceries to job sites for unpaid workers at FBI offices, airports, and military bases. Our research found that 41% of households affected by federal job losses are already food insecure and over two-thirds of them fall into the most severe category – very low food security.

And over the next year, many more families will be affected by the harmful cuts in HR 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill. The new federal legislation will reduce SNAP benefits by an average of \$187 per month for 50,000 families in the DMV. At the same time, 116,000 people in the region are expected to lose Medicaid coverage. The families who rely on both programs – 100,000 individuals – face especially severe risks.

Thanks to this legislation and the leadership of the Council, we will continue to make progress against hunger and food insecurity. By joining public and private sectors, faith-based and secular organizations, big and small organizations, we will continue to provide nutritious food today and brighter futures tomorrow.

Joe Liu, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy  
Capital Area Food Bank

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