



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**March 3, 2020**

**HB 1313**

**Family Investment Program – Temporary Cash Assistance – Eligibility**

**House Appropriations Committee**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

House Bill 1313 prohibits the reduction or termination of temporary cash assistance due to noncompliance with work participation, unless a specific good cause reason, outlined in the bill, is shown. It further establishes a thirty day grace period for those in noncompliance, sets a designation of 75% for children and 25% for adults in a family, with an exception for pregnant individuals who are designated at 100%, for assistance, and stipulates that a child’s percentage designation can never be reduced for an adult family member’s noncompliance, whereas an adult’s may only be reduced by 25% with good cause or child support requirements.

The Conference frequently advocates for the protection of social safety net programs included in the state budget to promote the common good in Maryland. Given budget challenges that may arise in coming fiscal years, it is especially important now to evaluate how current funding is or is not meeting the needs of all programs and how they grow in its capacity to assist Marylanders. Without adequate funding for programs and grants like Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), vulnerable Marylanders will face additional obstacles to self-sufficiency due to their inability to meet their basic needs.

Given the relatively low amount of financial assistance that anti-poverty programs such as TCA currently provide to individuals and families in Maryland, legislation such as House Bill 1313 is of critical importance to protect the assistance from situations often out of the person’s capacity to control, such as illness, homelessness, transportation, or lack of child care.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1313.