

**From: Christian Polley**

**Re: Written Testimony in Support of SB 787**

**Date: March 6, 2020 to the Senate Finance Committee**

TCA sanction affects lower class families in ways that higher class people could never imagine. While in the work activity program I had an experience where case workers told me not to make friends with any one because “those people aren’t going anywhere”. That made me upset because I was one of those people, it made me feel like I wasn’t going anywhere with my life. If I could I would have presented this testimony orally, but right now I am trying to access WIC (Woman Infant Child) benefits, while in culinary training 4 days a week, and 8 months pregnant.

The first thing people whom aren’t in our shoes think is, “Why can’t they do it on our own? Why can’t they just get a job?” Some people even think as outrageous as if we’re on drugs. In all actuality we’re just people struggling day to day and have been put in a harder place for us to overcome the social economic ladder. My mother, is a working mother with 5 children and she still needs help every month when it comes to food stamps. She has a home in a not so good neighborhood, a car, and a decent job working at “Rent A Center.” You’d think she’s better off, but in all actuality sometimes the simplest things like food stamps can go a long way helping a person. I never understood what it was like to be an adult with a rough childhood raised in West Baltimore until I got older. At 22, I’ve had my food stamps cut, TCA sanctioned while I’m currently pregnant. Why can’t I just get a job? I’ve been having a hard time getting hired pregnant. My last job I had in November 2019 fired me because “I was moving too slow at work and didn’t meet the requirements of a fast paced environment.” I was scared to tell them about my pregnancy. I’ve been in a domestic violence shelter for a few months now, due to abuse from my child’s father. I still struggle with that. Sometimes we assume that people can do better because of working opportunities in the world, when in all actuality some people are left in misfortune trying to put everything together.

The small benefits we do get from DSS leaves us with so much requirements on top of us trying to get our lives together. It’s almost like when you see a homeless person outside begging for drug money, you don’t want to support their habit. But then you come across a genuinely homeless person who was stuck in a disposition to become homeless. We have to remember that not everyone is the same, and that some people truly do need this help. We shouldn’t base every homeless person’s decision on the next person. We shouldn’t categorize everyone in one box because there are genuine people who could benefit for this assistance.