



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

HB 0562 Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng – President

Date: February 28, 2023

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) supports social policies that promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families and programs that are designed to prevent or reduce poverty. Individuals who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and access to health care.

HB 562 requires the Department of Human Services, through the local departments of social service to provide a specified housing allowance to an eligible household receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or transitional support services and continue providing the allowance for six months after termination of TCA benefits under specified circumstances.

Maryland is the 9th most unaffordable state to live in. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has determined that Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a 2 bedroom is \$1,548 in Baltimore City, Baltimore and Anne Arundel and \$1,838 in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. Currently, the **maximum TCA benefit** for a household of three is **\$727**.

Fair Market Rent is unaffordable for families now receiving TCA. One thousand, one hundred, thirteen (1,113) families receiving TCA in 2022 experienced homelessness in Maryland.

Under HB 562, eligible households will receive \$350 for a household of one, plus \$100 per additional household member added to their current TCA benefits the recipient(s) currently get. For example, a household of three people will receive \$1,277 (\$727 + \$350 + \$200).

With the proposed HB 562 housing allowance, families experiencing poverty will have greater access to the rental market and be able to cover the rising cost of rent and utilities. In addition, to the allowance giving families the opportunity to access stable housing, it will allow them to maintain that stability.

The League of Women Voters Maryland urges the committee to return a favorable report on HB 562.