



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

March 27, 2024

SB 202

Department of Aging - Caregiver Expense Grant Program - Established

House Appropriations Committee

**Position: FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 202. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 202 would provide immediate family caregivers a grant equal to 30% of their expenses after the first \$2,000 annually, up to a maximum of \$2,500. The grant would apply to any expenses incurred in the care of an adult immediate family member who requires assistance with daily living activities.

As a society, it is essential that we provide for the people that have dedicated themselves to caring for those in need. In order to provide for the elderly and the disabled, we must ensure the continuance of support for caregivers in Maryland. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis reminds us that, "by isolating the elderly and leaving them in the care of others without the closeness and concern of family members, we disfigure and impoverish the family itself. We also end up depriving young people of a necessary connection to their roots and a wisdom that the young cannot achieve on their own."

With a growing elderly population nationwide and hundreds of thousands of Marylanders currently caring for others, it is integral to the growth of communities that they are supported in their service to others. There is also a growing need to support these caregivers, many of whom cannot afford their care necessary for their aging immediate family members, particularly as the "Baby Boomer" generation ages. Therefore, now is an optimal time for ensuring state support for caregivers.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 202.