



**SB 208 - Human Services - Maryland Assistive Technology Program - Establishment**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**January 29, 2025**

**SUPPORT**

Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 208. This bill will ensure individuals with disabilities have enhanced access to assistive technology devices and services.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

CASH connects families to critical community resources, and we recognize the profound impact assistive technology can have on individuals with disabilities. Many of the families we serve face complicated challenges due to accessibility barriers. Increased access to assistive technology ensures that these families can access the tools they need to thrive, whether in securing employment, managing daily activities, or accessing education and social services.

SB 208 establishes The Maryland Assistive Technology Program which is designed to expand statewide access to assistive technology, support underrepresented communities, and promote economic self-sufficiency by addressing accessibility barriers. This will increase equitable access to assistive technology devices for underrepresented and low-income populations. These devices play a key role in enabling individuals to pursue education, employment, and independent living, thereby enhancing their financial stability and quality of life.

The Assistive Technology Services Fund ensures a sustainable mechanism to finance assessments, training, and device lending, while encouraging innovation and resource optimization. This fund is an investment in long-term solutions for accessibility and inclusion. Assistive technology supports workforce participation for individuals with disabilities by mitigating barriers to employment and education. Senate Bill 208 represents a vital step toward a more inclusive and equitable Maryland.

***Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 208.***

*Creating Assets, Savings and Hope*