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**SB923**  
**Favorable**

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TO: The Honorable Delores Kelley, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Annie Coble  
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Johns Hopkins would like to offer its full support for Senate Bill 923, Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Eligibility and Disenrollment. The bill extends a woman's Medicaid eligibility for the duration of her pregnancy and for one year immediately following the end of the pregnancy. Current Medicaid eligibility ends two months after the end of pregnancy. Extending Medicaid eligibility and therefore access to health care is important not only for the health of the mother, but for the health of the baby as well.

This bill addresses a recommendation in the Report of the Senate President's Advisory Workgroup on Equity and Inclusion. That Workgroup identified several pieces of data indicating health disparities for maternal and infant mortality and recommended extending Medicaid coverage as a means to close those gaps in racial health disparities.

Johns Hopkins experts agree that extending coverage has a particular role for women who are otherwise insurance ineligible. Women with pregnancy-related health problems such as preeclampsia and gestational diabetes often need intermittent follow-up for several months, or longer term follow-up. They also often need time to identify a primary care provider who is accessible and affordable.

As the Workgroup's report stated, Maryland's maternal mortality rate for Black women is 3.7 times that of White women and the racial disparity has widened in recent year. Johns Hopkins is actively working to reduce this disparity through research by the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and through targeted, innovative programs, such as the Center for Addiction and Pregnancy on the Bayview Medical Campus.

SB 923 is especially timely as the urgent need to address health disparities is now more apparent than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the fact that Maryland Black and Latinx communities bear an undeserved burden of racial, economic, and health disparities. For these reasons and more, Johns Hopkins would urge a favorable report on SB923, Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Eligibility and Disenrollment.