



**Testimony Concerning SB 218:
“Maryland Child Tax Credit”
Submitted to the House Ways & Means Committee
February 23, 2021**

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports SB 218, which would allow very low-income families to claim a credit against the State income tax for dependent children and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability, affordability and quality of child care, family support services, and early education. We have been active in state and federal debates on education and welfare reform and are strongly committed to ensuring that low- and moderate-income working families—and indeed, all families—have the supports they need to care for their children and to be economically self-sufficient.

Poverty has a devastating impact on families, and especially on young children. The children’s physical health, social and emotional development, school readiness, and ultimate life outcomes face severe challenges. Deep poverty—often defined as living with income at less than half the federal poverty level, or approximately \$11,000 for a family of 3—exacerbates these challenges greatly. Even a modest increase in income for these families has been demonstrated by the National Institutes of Health (among others) to result in significantly better outcomes for individuals and for society as a whole. Many Maryland families, even those who have moved from welfare to work, still live in poverty. The EITC is one of the nation’s most powerful tools for alleviating poverty.

The child tax credit that would be established by SB 218 is narrowly targeted to families with incomes of \$6000 or less. Although the target population is narrow, the individual and social benefits are arguably broader than we can calculate.

MFN urges your favorable consideration of SB 218.

