



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 22, 2021

**SB 218
Income Tax - Child Tax Credit and Expansion of the Earned Income Credit
House Ways & Means Committee**

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 218. The Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, including the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

Senate Bill 218 creates a refundable tax credit against the State income tax for up to \$500 per child for any child under the age of six or for children with disabilities who are under the age of seventeen. To qualify, however, parents must have a federal adjusted gross income of \$6,000 or less annually.

The Church has long supported legislation such as Child Tax Credits that provide dignity for low-income people and their families. Furthermore, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has supported proposals seeking to “expand assistance to parents with children and improve family formation and stability.” (*Letter to Congress on Child Tax Credit*, USCCB, 3/16/2016) In the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace asserted that all persons deserve “a wage sufficient to maintain a family and allow it to live decently... There can be several different ways to make a family wage a concrete reality. Various forms of important social provisions help to bring it about, for example, family subsidies and other contributions for dependent family members...” Establishing a Child Tax Credit in Maryland is one significant and tangible way to achieve this stability for low-income families throughout the state.

Child tax credits are proven anti-poverty tools, aiming to eliminate the need for families to make the impossible and unnecessary choice between financial stability and family stability. Although a \$6,000 income cap is a seemingly low limit, those who are eligible to claim the credit will notice immediate and substantial financial assistance, particularly when they have multiple dependents. The Conference strongly supports legislation that addresses this need. Legislative proposals such as the creation of a child tax credit and the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit are important tools for achieving this assistance and combatting poverty.

The Conference also supports the amendments made to this bill in the House of Delegates. Both in our pews and through those who we serve, the Church has seen firsthand how undocumented individuals have been affected by the pandemic. Those Marylanders often work in professions essential to the everyday lives of their neighbors and have braved the pandemic despite being disproportionately affected. Low-income individuals and families utilizing an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to file taxes are now represented in this bill, and rightfully so.

It is for these reasons that the Conference respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 218.