



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 829

Department of Human Services - Family Investment Program - Contract
and Program Review
March 10, 2022

Submitted by Julia Gross and Kali Schumitz, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

211 Maryland
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Energy Advocates
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Job Opportunities Task Force
Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
Inc.
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Food Bank
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

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The Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP) strongly supports SB 829, which would require a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of Maryland's Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program.

TCA is Maryland's cash assistance program that funded in large part by the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant. TCA is available to low income or no income families. Adult members of the household are required to participate in work activities each week. Our TCA program is not living up to the promises of the mid-1990's – it is not leading recipients to work and increased wages. **Five years after leaving TCA 68% of former recipients live in deep poverty (less than 50% of the poverty line)**, which is less than \$9,155 per year for a family of two.

While the TANF block grant provides states with significant flexibility to design their welfare programs, it does tie funding to a state achieving a target work participation rate. These work participation requirements are deeply rooted in our country's history of racist ideas and policies, and this reduces the effectiveness of this program for all TCA participants, regardless of race.

SB 829 would require the Department of Human Services to hire an outside consultant to review Maryland's TCA program, and make suggestions on how the program can be improved. It also would help ensure that the contractors receiving state funds to administer workforce participation services are providing meaningful programming that helps parents receiving TCA get back on a permanent path to economic security.

MAP appreciates your consideration, and strongly urges a favorable report with amendments on SB 829.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.