



# Welfare Advocates

Founded 1979

228 W. Lexington Street — Suite 220 • Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3432  
Phone: 410.261.5874 • Fax: 410.889.0203

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## House Bill 288 Sales Use and Tax – Baby Products - Exemption

House Ways and Means Committee  
February 2, 2022

### Support

*Welfare Advocates is a statewide coalition of social service organizations, advocacy groups, faith communities, and community members, whose mission it is to educate ourselves, and the wider community and to advocate for an adequate safety net and public policies that support families moving towards economic stability.*

**Welfare Advocates supports HB 288**, which exempts baby bottles, baby bottle nipples, and infant car seats from the State's sale tax.

**Baby supplies are a necessary expense for families with young children, and are a substantial cost burden for low-income families.** The average cost of an adequate supply of bottles is \$60 per child.<sup>1</sup> For low-income families receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) – which for a household with one parent and two children is currently \$727 a month – baby supplies are a significant portion of the family's income. Over 40% of families receiving TCA have a child under the age of three, and many of these households are spending a considerable amount of their income on supplies for their children.<sup>2</sup> Baby supplies cannot be purchased with SNAP or WIC, and baby bottles are not often donated to food banks or shelters.

**As many breastfeeding products are already tax-free, it would be equitable to make baby bottles and related supplies tax-free for mothers who are unable to breastfeed and/or need to store pumped breast milk.** Bottles are especially useful for low-income families on TCA, as many these households have a single adult caretaker who is trying to juggle work schedules and child feeding schedules. Having a clean, adequate supply of bottles is a necessity for working families. Anything that can be done – like eliminating sales tax – can help reduce the cost burden of baby supplies and make budgets stretch a little further for low-income families.

**WA appreciates your consideration, and respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 288.**

Submitted by Lisa Klingenmaier, *Chair of Welfare Advocates*

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<sup>1</sup> New York Life. 2021. <https://www.newyorklife.com/articles/breakdown-of-biggest-expenses-for-your-child>

<sup>2</sup> Lauren A. Hall & Letitia Logan Passarella. *Life After Welfare - 2020 Annual Update*. University of Maryland School of Social Work Ruth Young Center for Families & Children. <https://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/media/ssw/fwrtg/welfare-research/life-after-welfare/Life-after-Welfare,-2020-Update.pdf?&>

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