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Patrick Moran - President

HB 323 - Social Services Programs - Eligibility and Enrollment

POSITION: INFORMATION ONLY

AFSCME Council 3 represents the state employees who work at the Department of Human Services. Our members are on the frontlines daily administering the benefits HB 323 hopes to expand. We support these social programs to all Marylanders in need but want to highlight a few concerns that might arise during implementation.

Program Staffing Shortages

In addition to helping families and individuals apply for these benefits, our members also do verification on each application to ensure that no ineligible people get benefits. As of [January 1, 2023](#), the Department of Legislative Services reports a vacancy rate of nearly 16% in the Family Investment Administration where these programs are administered.

IT Issues Persist

Our members are still experiencing lengthy delays in processing cases in MDTHINK. This program has been a work in progress since it was first introduced in August 2018. Eligibility and enrollment functions went live in November 2021 and our members are still struggling with getting the system to work efficiently.

Possible Program Redundancies

Finally, our members have some concerns that HB 323 may create some redundancies among programs. Each program has a specific set of eligibility criteria. Staff may need to assess the criteria in HB 323 at the same time they are assessing for federally mandated criteria. Without a better system, this could cause overlaps in the work and require more resources instead of fewer.

We appreciate the intent of HB 323 and hope to work the legislature and administration to ensure that we have enough resources to implement it should it pass. Thank you.

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