



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony prepared for the
Finance Committee
on
Senate Bill 26
February 2, 2023
Position: **Favorable**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify for sufficiency and well-being for all. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community with three judicatories in our State.

Sufficient livelihood and access to appropriate and affordable health care for all people have been adopted in moral deliberation statements within our community (“Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All,” 1999; “Caring for Health,” 2003).

Maryland has done good things with the simple mechanism of notification about access to health care through tax filing; for example, *Senate Bill 369* of 2022. **Senate Bill 26** expands that policy principle with convergent eligibility. It would streamline sign-up for services such as Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and energy assistance programs by establishing a categorical eligibility, one application standard that allows an individual to enroll in all the available services.

The services and eligibility for them are already established. Yet there remain people without adequate medical care, or nutrition, or safe shelter, who do not, or cannot apply. Multiple application processes, with annual renewal requirements, asking for the same information, amount to a barrier for underserved clients for State services. It also creates an unnecessary State administrative burden.

Senate Bill 26 would bring the programs to eligible clients in an efficient and effective manner, illustrated by prior “express lane” State initiatives that have increased participation. Because of that, and because of the good it would do for residents of the State, we urge your favorable report.

Lee Hudson