

SB420 - Temporary Cash Assistance - Housing Testim

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Position: FAV

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Written Testimony

**SB420 - Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
 Senate Finance Committee – February 23, 2023**

Support

Background: Senate Bill 420 would require a local department of social services to establish a housing allowance to families receiving temporary cash assistance (TCA) or transitional support services. Eligible households will receive \$350 for a household of one, and \$100 for each additional member on top of the benefits they already receive from TCA, transitional support services, and/or SNAP.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes Jewish Community Services (JCS), which provides social services to low-income Marylanders. SB420 will directly impact these clients and assist them in affording stable housing.

Maryland has one of the highest rates of poverty in the country, with almost 50% of those living in poverty being considered as living in *deep* poverty. Over 1,000 families receiving TCA in 2022 experienced homelessness. With a housing allowance, these families will have greater access to the rental market and be able to cover the rising cost of rent and utilities. This program will be an investment in the health of families and will generate cost savings for the state. By providing this support in the short term, households receiving a housing allowance can build the economic security necessary to transition off of TCA permanently.

During a time where we are experiencing historic inflation across the country, it is critical to create this TCA housing allowance, giving low-income families greater access to the rental market. **For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on SB420.**

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

SB 420_PJC_Favorable_FIN.pdf

Uploaded by: Ashley Black

Position: FAV



Ashley Black, Staff Attorney
Public Justice Center
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-625-9409, ext. 224
blacka@publicjustice.org

SB 420
Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
Hearing of The Senate Finance Committee
February 23, 2023
1:00 PM

SUPPORT

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Health and Benefits Equity Project advocates to protect and expand access to healthcare and safety net services for Marylanders struggling to make ends meet. We support policies and practices that are designed to eliminate economic and racial inequities and enable every Marylander to attain their highest level of health. **PJC strongly supports SB 420**, which would require a local department of social services to provide a housing allowance to households that are receiving Temporary Cash Assistance or transitional support services and are not receiving a certain housing subsidy where the tenant's portion of rent is based on a percentage of the tenant's income. It would also require the continuation of a housing allowance for 6 months following the termination of TCA if the household is receiving or is eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Thousands of families in Maryland receive TCA. Though most low-income working families earn too much to qualify for TCA, in fiscal year 2021, over 32,000 Marylanders were TCA recipients.¹ TCA is a block grant program that serves as a critical resource for children and their caretakers, enabling them to pay for shelter, clothing and other necessities.

SB 420 would make housing more affordable for low-income families receiving TCA. Maryland is the 9th most unaffordable state in the country. This is illustrated by the fact that the maximum TCA benefit for a household of 3 is \$727 and the Fair Market Rent for a 2 bedroom in Baltimore City and Baltimore County is \$1,548 per month – more than twice the TCA benefit. This means that families that rely on TCA to cover rent and other necessities and do not have other sources of income are priced out of living in certain Maryland counties. SB 420 addresses this inequity by providing eligible households with an additional \$350 for a household of 1, plus \$100 per additional household

¹ University of Maryland School of Social Work, *Temporary Cash Assistance: 2021 Jurisdictional Snapshots* (April 2022), https://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/media/ssw/fwrtg/welfare-research/life-on-welfare/TCA-Snapshots_2021.pdf?&

member on top of the TCA benefits that they currently receive. If passed, SB 420 would help reduce housing insecurity by providing low-income families with greater access to the housing market.

Everyone should have a place to call home. Housing is a key social determinant of health and essential for enabling all Marylanders to attain good health. For these reasons, the Public Justice Center urges the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for **SB 420**. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Ashley Black at 410-625-9409 ext. 224 or blacka@publicjustice.org.

HPRP SB 420_Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Audreina Blanding

Position: FAV

HOMELESS PERSONS REPRESENTATION PROJECT, INC.

201 North Charles Street, Suite 1104 Baltimore, MD 21201 (Headquarters)
P.O. Box 1787, Rockville, Maryland 20849 (Satellite Office)
(410) 685-6589 www.hprplaw.org

Support – SB 420

Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance Hearing of Senate Finance Committee, February 23, 2023 Testimony of Audreina Blanding, Linda Kennedy Fellow Homeless Persons Representation Project

The Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP) is a non-profit civil legal services organization that provides free legal representation to people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness on legal issues that will lead to an end to homelessness. HPRP has helped thousands of individuals and families to obtain benefits through administrative appeals and advocacy around the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program, Maryland’s federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. However, even when families receive TCA benefits, many still cannot afford stable housing in the face of rising rental costs and lack of affordable housing. Thus, HPRP unequivocally supports SB 420 which will provide families with a housing allowance of \$350 per person, plus \$100 for each additional household member.

Families that Receive TCA Cannot Afford Unsubsidized Rent in Maryland

Currently, Maryland is the 9th most unaffordable state to live in.¹ In 2023, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determined that fair market rent (FMR)² for an unsubsidized two-bedroom apartment is \$1,548 in seven Maryland counties, including Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Anne Arundel County.³ The FMR is as high as \$1,838 in five counties, including Prince George’s County and Montgomery County.⁴ However, a household of three people would only receive a TCA benefit of \$727 per month at *maximum*.⁵ Therein lies the problem: over 70% of all families that receive TCA reside in one of five counties⁶ with an FMR that is 2.1 times higher than their benefit. The unaffordability of rent explains why at least 1,113 families that received TCA in 2022 still experienced homelessness.⁷ It is clear: TCA alone is insufficient for families living in Maryland without subsidized housing.

SB 420 Addresses Racial Inequities, Increases Low Income Families’ Access to the Rental Market, and Provides Housing Stability.

The rising rental costs, and insufficient incomes to meet that burden, have put an increased strain on low-income families which only exacerbates pre-existing racial inequities. Of all families that receive TCA in Maryland, 64.5% are Black, who—due to a long history of racism and racially

¹ AURAND, ET. AL, *Out of Reach 2023*, NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION (2023), <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/md>

² FMRs are housing market-wide estimates of rent (plus the cost of utilities) that “provide opportunities to rent standard quality housing” in the area where rental “units are in competition.” The FMR is “expressed as a percentile point within the rent distribution of standard quality rental housing units in the area.” HUD generally sets FMR at the 40th percentile: the amount below which 40% of standard quality units fall. FMRs exclude “public housing units, newly built units and substandard units.” 24 C.F.R. § 888.113.

³ See *2023 FMR Summary*, HUD (2023) https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2023_code/2023state_summary.odn

⁴ This is also the FMR for Calvert, Charles, and Frederick counties. *Supra* note 3.

⁵ The Department issued an informational memo in 2022 showing the current benefits schedule, available at [22-31 IM - TCA, TDAP Benefits Decrease](#)

⁶ Data obtained from the Maryland Department of Human Services through a Public Information Act request. In calendar year 2022, there were a total of 32,393 households that received TCA in Maryland. 70.35% of these households (22,788) were located in the following five counties: Baltimore City (30.09%); Baltimore County (13.94%); Prince George’s County (12.76%); Anne Arundel County (7.62%); and Montgomery County (5.94%).

⁷ *Supra* note 6.

discriminatory housing policies⁸—are already disproportionately likely to face severe rent burdens and experience homelessness.⁹ In fact, of the 1,113 TCA families that experienced homelessness in 2022, 69.4% were Black.¹⁰ Thus, the lack of affordable housing and inadequate income to afford rent is also a clear racial justice issue.

SB 420 will alleviate that strain on low-income families and mitigate the historic racial inequities surrounding housing. While this allowance may not cover the cost of every basic need, the help it will provide is critical for families that have very low or no other income. With SB 420, that same family of three will receive a maximum TCA benefit of \$727, plus a \$550 housing allowance, which will provide the family with a total TCA benefit of \$1,277. This will help a family pay for rent, utilities, diapers, toiletries, medicine, transportation, or any number of other costs. Not only will this allowance offer the family more access to the rental market, but it will provide housing stability to Maryland households, particularly for Black families.

Federal TANF Funding Can and Should Be Used to Reduce Housing Instability and Homelessness in Maryland

It is imperative that federal TANF funds be leveraged to aid low-income families experiencing or at risk of housing instability or homelessness.¹¹ While federal subsidized housing programs can address these issues, 3 in 4 low-income renters in need of federal rental assistance do not receive it.¹² Here in Maryland, there are long waiting lists for public housing and Section 8 housing (Housing Choice Voucher). These lists are typically closed; even if they are open, it is only for a few days and applicants are selected through a lottery system. For example, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher waiting list is currently closed in Baltimore City¹³ (the home to the largest percentage of families that receive TCA). The last time this wait list was open was October 2014, for a mere nine days; before that, the list had not been available since 2003.¹⁴ To address the lack of affordable housing, other states have created housing allowances within their TANF programs to address housing instability and Maryland should do the same through SB 420.¹⁵

HPRP strongly urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 420. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Madaio (she/her), Director – Economic Justice, at (410) 716-0521 or mmadaio@hprplaw.org.

⁸ A majority of Black families do not own homes today as a direct consequence of segregationist practices such as redlining, restrictive covenants, domestic terrorism, etc. See generally A.M. DICKERSON, *Systemic Racism and Housing*, 70 EMORY L. J. 1535 (2021), <https://scholarlycommons.law.emory.edu/elj/vol70/iss7/5/>. See also RICHARD ROTHSTEIN, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Government Segregated America*, LIVERIGHT (2017).

⁹ WILL FISCHER, SONYA ACOSTA AND ERIK GARTLAND, *More Housing Vouchers: Most Important Step to Help More People Afford Stable Homes*, CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES (May 13, 2021), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/more-housing-vouchers-most-important-step-to-help-more-people-afford-stable-homes#>

¹⁰ Appendix, *supra* note 6.

¹¹ See ALI ZANE, ET. AL. *TANF Can Be a Critical Tool to Address Family Housing Instability and Homelessness*, CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES (July 19, 2022), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/tanf-can-be-a-critical-tool-to-address-family-housing-instability>

¹² Only 1 in 4 eligible renter households receive federal rental assistance due to funding limitations. See ERIK GARTLAND, *Chart Book: Funding Limitations Create Widespread Unmet Need for Rental Assistance*, CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES (Feb 22, 2022), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/funding-limitations-create-widespread-unmet-need-for-rental-assistance>

¹³ Housing Authority of Baltimore City, <https://www.habc.org/habc-information/programs-departments/hcvc/hcvc-applicants/>

¹⁴ NATALIE SHERMAN, *City to Open Section 8 Wait List for First Time Since 2003*, BALTIMORE SUN (October 2, 2014), <https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/bs-md-waitlist-20141002-story.html>

¹⁵ Six states provide a housing allowance to their TANF beneficiaries to combat rising rental costs. These states include Hawaii (providing \$500), Maine (providing \$300), Minnesota (providing \$110), Massachusetts (providing \$40), North Dakota (providing \$50), and Vermont (providing up to \$45). See ZANE, *supra* note 11.

CDN SB 420 FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Claudia Wilson Randall

Position: FAV



Testimony SB 420
Finance Committee
February 23, 2023
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairperson Griffith and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) is the voice for Maryland's community development sector and serves nearly 200 member organizations. CDN—focuses on small affordable housing developers, housing counseling agencies and community-based non-profits across the state of Maryland. The mission of CDN is to promote, strengthen and advocate for the community development sector throughout Maryland's urban, suburban and rural communities.

SB 420- Provides a housing allowance to households that are receiving temporary cash assistance or transitional support services and are not receiving a certain housing subsidy where the tenant's portion of rent is based on a percentage of the tenant's income; and requiring the continuation of a housing allowance for 6 months following the termination of temporary cash assistance if the household is receiving or is eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

In Maryland, households with children, older adults and people with disabilities are most at risk for eviction. Rental assistance not only enables families to meet their housing needs but it leaves them with more resources to meet other basic needs. Evictions create significant costs for state and local governments including costs associated with shelters, education, transportation for homeless youth, foster care, and health care provided in hospitals rather than community-based care.

Many believe that eviction is a high poverty urban problem but it is clear that suburban renters face many of the same challenges as their city counterparts, including eviction. Over the past decade, research shows that evictions reinforce poverty and limit housing opportunities for Maryland's most fragile citizens. The stain of an eviction sets Marylanders on a path of housing insecurity that limits educational and economic opportunities, and increases health problems for them and their families.

A housing allowance could be a lifeline for households throughout the state of Maryland.

We ask that the committee issue a favorable report on SB 420.

Submitted by Claudia Wilson Randall, Executive Director, Community Development Network

Maryland SB 420 Testimony- Gina Azito Thompson, CB

Uploaded by: Gina Thompson

Position: FAV

**Testimony of Gina Azito Thompson, Research Associate, Housing and Income Security at the
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Before the Senate Finance Committee in Support of SB 420/
HB 562**

February 23, 2023

Good afternoon. I am testifying today in support of SB 420/HB 562, legislation that will advance policies that improve the lives of families in need who are receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or other assistance through Maryland's Family Investment Program (FIP).

My name is Gina Azito Thompson and I am a Research Associate on the Housing and Income Security Team at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonpartisan policy think tank that focuses on improving the lives of families with low incomes. The Center is nationally known for its expertise on programs that provide cash assistance to families with children. We conduct analysis on the ways in which the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs – TCA and FIP in Maryland -- have been implemented in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. We use our expertise to advocate for policies at the state and federal level that will improve the lives of families with little or no earnings.

The Need for Housing Assistance in Maryland

Stable and safe housing is critical for the healthy growth and development of children and is an important part of the foundation that allows parents to succeed in their roles as caretakers and workers. For those who receive it, federal rental assistance helps families afford the cost of private rental units they otherwise could not afford on their low salaries; unfortunately, because of underfunding, only 200,700 people across the state received federal rental assistance. Almost 400,000 Marylanders in households with low incomes paid more than half their income for housing in 2022, and 33 percent of whom are parents of children.

In Fiscal Year 2021, Maryland had nearly 23,000 total families receiving TCA to help them afford their basic needs; while most of these families should be eligible for subsidized housing assistance, in reality only 21 percent actually received that assistance. For families with children, housing is often the largest expense. According to the National Low Income Housing Commission, the average Fair Market Rent (FMR – HUD's estimate of what a family moving today would pay for modest housing) for a 2-bedroom apartment in Maryland is \$1,505 per month. A full-time worker receiving minimum wage would have to work 93 hours a week to be able to afford such housing.

Federal standards define rent (including utilities) as affordable when it takes up no more than 30 percent of a household's income. The current Maryland TCA benefit of \$727 per month for a family of three leaves a family far below that standard. If a family receiving that benefit spent only 30 percent of their income on rent, they would only be able to afford \$218 per month in rent, leaving a gap of \$1,287 between what a TCA family can afford and the average FMR for a two-bedroom apartment.

Under this proposed legislation, a family of three receiving TCA assistance would now be able to afford \$768 per month in rent, increasing the share of rent affordable to a TCA family to more than half of the FMR. This would allow families to afford better housing and could also help free up their budgets so they can afford other basic essentials such as diapers, personal hygiene items, transportation, and clothing. This assistance is especially important given the current high levels of inflation. Families with low incomes are more likely to feel the impacts of inflation, and they also are more likely to spend a greater share of their income on housing compared to families with middle- and higher-incomes. Driven by the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found inflation increased 9.1 percent for the 122 month-period ending in June 2022, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending in November 1981. Families should not have to face tough choices between paying rent or buying diapers

and other necessities in challenging times. Maryland can and should do more to help families meet their basic needs.

SB 420/HB 562 Would Make Important Improvements for Families with Very Low Incomes

SB 420/HB 562 would provide a housing allowance for those families most in need. The following aspects of SB 420/HB 562 would contribute to better outcomes for Maryland families with low incomes across the state:

- **It would reduce hardship for families with very low incomes, especially for families of color.** Black and Latinx children and their families faced higher rates of housing insecurity and eviction before and during the COVID-10 pandemic. Expanding access to stable housing would promote equity.
- **It would improve positive outcomes for children related to well-being.** Access to safe and stable housing is foundational to children's health, development, and education and providing a TCA housing supplement is consistent with TANF's stated purpose to assist families in need so children can be cared for and thrive in their homes.
- **It would reduce the number of families experiencing housing instability due to having very low incomes.** Recent research has shown an association between TANF assistance and declines in family homelessness, underscoring the important role TCA can play.

In addition to the monthly cash assistance benefit, Maryland can and should provide a monthly housing supplement for families following other states across the country such as Hawai'i, Maine, Massachusetts, North Dakota, and Vermont. Providing a housing supplement will put Maryland on a path towards continuing to modernize their TANF program and ensuring families can afford to meet their basic needs while experiencing financial insecurity.

SB 420 - Supp - Finance - TCA Housing Allowance.pd

Uploaded by: Henry Bogdan

Position: FAV



marylandnonprofits.org

1500 Union Avenue | Suite 2500 | Baltimore, MD 21211
410.727.6367 | 800.273.6367 | Fax 410.235.2190

February 23, 2023

Testimony on Senate Bill 420
Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1500 nonprofit organizations and institutions. **We urge you to support Senate Bill 420 to provide additional housing support to Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients.**

Senate Bill 420 provides a housing allowance to households that are receiving temporary cash assistance or transitional support services and are not receiving a certain housing subsidy where the tenant's portion of rent is based on a percentage of the tenant's income; and requiring the continuation of a housing allowance for 6 months following the termination of temporary cash assistance if the household is receiving or is eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Renters are struggling to regain economic self-sufficiency in a pandemic economy:

1. Ripple effects from the pandemic are still causing financial disruptions. People are still missing hours at work due to COVID or COVID related closures.
2. Rent inflation skyrocketed during the pandemic, increasing 19% over two years in the Baltimore area alone.
3. Asset depletion and increasing rent debt is widespread among low-income renters.

With savings and credit tapped out, TCA households in particular have no buffer to keep them from homelessness when small financial setbacks inevitably happen.

We urge you to move favorable on Senate Bill 420.



Maryland Nonprofits' mission is to strengthen organizations and networks for greater quality of life and equity.

SB420 JOTF FAV - Human Services – Temporary Cash A

Uploaded by: Ioana Stoica

Position: FAV



Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 420:
Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance

TO: Chair Melony Griffith and Members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Ioana Stoica, Policy Advocate
DATE: February 23, 2023

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that advocates for better jobs, skills training, and wages for low-income workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports Senate Bill 420 as a means of ensuring that low-wage workers across the state who regularly access temporary cash assistance receive a monthly amount that is enough to support their and their families' housing needs.**

Maryland's low-wage workers are especially vulnerable to housing instability, as they are often faced with rising costs and a lack of affordable housing options. In 2018, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) released state data on housing affordability by state and county. In the Baltimore City metro area, the NLIHC data shows that a low-wage worker would need to work over 80 hours per week to afford a market-rate apartment. On the state level, affordable housing in Maryland was declared as simply "out of reach," while the data gives a startling glimpse into the reality faced by our low-wage working families and residents.

Steady employment is predicated on affordable housing stability. A 2016 Harvard study showed that stable housing has a direct impact on an individual's ability to maintain employment. This study found that the likelihood of job loss was up to 22 percent higher for individuals who did not have secure housing. Even further, lost employment disrupts the ability to maintain housing – creating a vicious cycle of poverty for Maryland's most vulnerable. At JOTF, through our experience in workforce training, we have found that our workforce program participants are primarily renters and experience housing access and insecurity issues similar to those discussed in the Harvard study.

Economic instability stemming from the pandemic continues to push tens of thousands of Maryland households to the brink of homelessness. Currently, over 108,000 households are still behind on the rent in Maryland and need assistance avoiding eviction. JOTF supports SB 420 as a means to provide housing assistance to households that are receiving temporary cash assistance or transitional support services. JOTF understands the fragile relationship that exists between housing and employment: to be stable in your employment, you must have a consistent, reliable, and safe place to live. For these reasons, **we respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 420.**

For more information on how SB 420 supports workforce development please contact Ioana Stoica, JOTF Policy Advocate at ioana@jotf.org or 240-643-0059.

HPP SB 420 Testimony- FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Emerson

Position: FAV

Testimony of the Human Trafficking Prevention Project

BILL NO: Senate Bill 420
TITLE: Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
COMMITTEE: Finance
HEARING DATE: February 23, 2023
POSITION: FAVORABLE

Senate Bill 420 would require local social service departments to provide a housing allowance for low-income families with children who receive Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or Transitional Support Services (TSS). The Human Trafficking Prevention Project (HTPP), which provides direct representation to survivors of human trafficking and those populations put at highest risk of exploitation, supports this bill because it will allow Maryland families experiencing poverty to access and maintain housing stability, which prevents human trafficking.

Maryland is the ninth most unaffordable state to live in, with approximately 30-39% of households in Maryland struggling to provide for their basic needs, including housing.¹ This poses a problem for many Marylanders, but especially families whose primary source of income is Temporary Cash Assistance.² In many cities in Maryland, TCA does not come close to covering rent at fair market value for families who receive these benefits.³ This means families receiving TCA are still experiencing housing instability and homelessness under the current system.

This issue is particularly relevant to the HTPP's work, as housing instability and homelessness are a common predictor *and* outcome of the crime of human trafficking.⁴ Traffickers prey on vulnerable populations, particularly those facing homelessness and housing instability, as emergency and short-term housing options are limited, and survivors are commonly left unhoused once their shelter options run out.⁵ As victims struggle to meet their basic needs, traffickers often exploit this vulnerability by offering shelter and food.⁶ When victims then try

¹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, *Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing 22* (2022), <https://nlihc.org/oor>; see also, United For ALICE, *ALICE Report: A Study of Financial Hardship in Maryland*, United Way of Central Maryland, <https://www.uwcm.org/alice> (last visited Feb. 22, 2023) (.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* (highlighting that Fair Market Rent for a 2 bedroom in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel is \$1,548 a month, while rent in Prince George's and Montgomery County is \$1,838 a month. The maximum TCA benefit for a household of three people is \$727).

⁴ See generally Danielle Richards, *The Intersection between Housing Instability and Human Trafficking*, United Ways Blog (Apr. 2022), <https://www.unitedway.org/blog/the-intersection-between-housing-instability-and-human-trafficking#> (citing data from Covenant House, a country-wide organization providing shelter and supportive services to youth experiencing homelessness, that found that 68% of the youth they serve had traded sex because they had no safe or consistent place to stay); Brittany Anthony et al., *On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking*, Polaris Project, 16 (Jul. 2018), <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A-Roadmap-for-Systems-and-Industries-to-Prevent-and-Disrupt-Human-Trafficking-Housing-and-Homelessness-Systems.pdf> (citing a survivor survey where 64% of survivor respondents reported being homeless or experiencing unstable housing when they were recruited by a trafficker).

⁵ Richards, *supra* note 3 (Traffickers are known to prey on the vulnerabilities of individuals that are experiencing poverty and homelessness); Polaris Project, *Analysis of 2020 National Human Trafficking Hotline Data*, Polaris Project Blog, <https://polarisproject.org/2020-us-national-human-trafficking-hotline-statistics/> (last visited Feb. 19, 2022) (citing that unstable housing is one of the primary risks for both sex and labor trafficking).

⁶ Anthony et al., *supra* note 4 at 18-19 (noting that traffickers coerce victims by misrepresenting a living arrangement with the

to escape their traffickers, the threat of homelessness is held against them to maintain control.⁷ Providing housing assistance to low-income families has been shown to have a direct effect on decreasing housing instability and homelessness,⁸ which, in turn lessens these individuals' vulnerability to human trafficking.⁹

By offering a housing allowance to families with children that already receive TCA or TSS, SB 420 will allow low-income families to better access housing when needed and better maintain that stability once safely housed. In doing so, this will also reduce the pool of vulnerable people that traffickers so often prey upon. For these reasons, the Human Trafficking Prevention Project supports Senate Bill 420, and respectfully urges a favorable report.

*For more information, please contact:
Jessica Emerson, LMSW, Esq.
Director, Human Trafficking Prevention Project
jemerson@ubalt.edu*

potential victim, offering private living conditions, free foods or illicit substances).

⁷ Anthony et al., *supra* note 4 at 16.

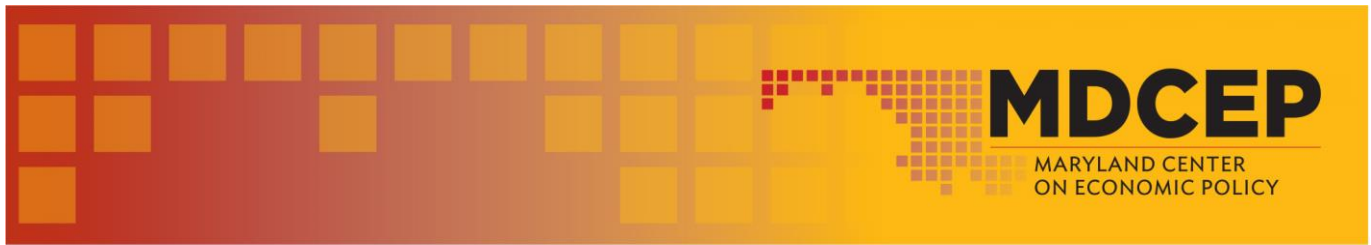
⁸ See generally Will Fischer et al., *Research Shows Rental Assistance Reduces Hardship and Provides Platforms to Expand Opportunities for Low-Income Families*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (Dec. 2019), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/research-shows-rental-assistance-reduces-hardship-and-provides-platform-to-expand> (highlighting that, in addition to decreasing homelessness, direct provision of rental assistance reduces poverty, improves outcomes for both children and adults, and reduces overall health costs), .

⁹ See generally Richards, *supra* note 4.

SB 420_MD Center on Economic Policy_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Kali Schumitz

Position: FAV



FEBRUARY 23, 2023

Greater Housing Stability Would Have Great Benefits for Most Vulnerable Maryland Families

Position Statement in Support of Senate Bill 420

Given before the Senate Finance Committee

Housing is among the most essential building blocks for individuals, families, and communities. But today, one in three Maryland households spends more on housing than they can afford, including nearly half of renters. **The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports Senate Bill 420** because it would help some of the lowest-income households in Maryland – those receiving Temporary Cash Assistance – better afford housing.

There is a housing affordability crisis in Maryland. Nearly one-third of all Maryland households are experiencing unaffordable housing costs, according to research by the National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners.ⁱ Of these, 67% are homeowners while 33% are renters. Among renters, 48% of households are cost burdened, and among low-income households, 76% are severely cost-burdened. The National Low Income Housing Coalition lists Maryland as the ninth least affordable state for renters. To afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in the state, a family must earn \$28.93 an hour or \$60,183 annually.ⁱⁱ A minimum wage worker in Maryland would have to work 78 hours per week year-round.

When families struggle to pay rent, they face greater risks of instability, eviction, and even homelessness, which research links to food insecurity, poor health, lower cognitive scores and academic achievement, and more frequent foster care placement among children. Unaffordable and unstable housing also perpetuates racial, economic and health disparities in our state. Black Marylanders are more likely to face unaffordable housing costs than their white neighbors. Black Marylanders are also considerably more likely to rent their homes than their white counterparts.ⁱⁱⁱ

Senate Bill 420 would provide a modest housing allowance for Maryland families who receive Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and do not receive any other form of rental assistance. The maximum monthly TCA benefit for a family of three is \$727 – less than half of what is needed to afford market rent for a basic two-bedroom apartment, let alone cover other expenses like utilities, transportation, and clothing.

It's not surprising, then, that more than 1,100 families receiving TCA in Maryland experienced homelessness last year. SB 420 would provide a baseline housing allowance of \$350 per month with an additional \$100 per additional family member per month. This would go a long way toward helping families afford market rent so they can get and keep safe, stable housing while they are receiving TCA.

Funding from Maryland's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant could be used to help fund a housing allowance. Currently six other states provide a housing allowance as part of their TANF programs. Maryland currently only spends about 28% of its block grant on direct assistance to families^{iv}.

Strengthening support for TCA recipients so they can afford a decent place to live would pay major dividends for all Marylanders. Affordable housing is the foundation of economic security. SB 420 will provide long-term benefits for children who grow up with greater economic stability.^v

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Senate Finance Committee make a favorable report on Senate Bill 420.

Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 420

Bill summary

Senate Bill 420 provides a housing allowance to Maryland families who receive Temporary Cash Assistance and do not have a housing choice voucher or receive other forms of housing assistance. The housing allowance would be \$350 per month for one person and an additional \$100 per month per additional family member.

Background

- Nearly one-third of all Maryland households are experiencing unaffordable housing costs, including nearly half of renters, according to research by the National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners.^{vi}
- The National Low Income Housing Coalition lists Maryland as the ninth least affordable state for renters. To afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in the state, a family must earn \$28.93 an hour or \$60,183 annually.^{vii} A minimum wage worker in Maryland would have to work 78 hours per week year-round.
- More than 1,100 families who received TCA in 2022 experienced homelessness

Equity Implications

Policies in the past have led to a system of unequal opportunities for marginalized groups within Maryland. Although the most obvious racially discriminatory policies have long been overturned or mitigated, the impact of these policies continue to persist in both society and public policy and have led to significant racial and health disparities. People of color experience much higher rates of economic insecurity and poverty and are more likely to use other economic relief programs to afford basic necessities. In particular, single-parent households, women, and children of color are overrepresented among families living in poverty.

Research shows that increasing economic security for households through programs like TCA can help reduce overall poverty, child poverty, and racial and ethnic inequities. Ensuring people can meet their basic needs strengthens our economy and can dismantle the economic barriers that too often hold back Marylanders of color.

- Three-quarters of low-income households in Maryland face a severe housing cost burden, according to research by the National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners, meaning that more than half their income goes toward housing.
- Black Marylanders are more likely to face unaffordable housing costs than their white neighbors. Black Marylanders are also considerably more likely to rent their homes than their white counterparts.^{viii}
- When families struggle to pay rent, they face greater risks of instability, eviction, and even homelessness, which research links to food insecurity, poor health, lower cognitive scores and academic achievement, and more frequent foster care placement among children.

Impact

Senate Bill 420 would likely **improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.

ⁱ Nick Finio, Jinyhup Kim, Andrew McMillan, Melissa Bondi, Amy Brisson, Amanda Davis, Mikaela Fenton, David Huaman, Anne Jordan, Chris Kizzie, Radhika Mohan, Claire Morehouse, Tania O'Connor, Eva Phillips, Erika Rivera, Laura Searfoss, Jerah Smith, Sam Speicher, Girma Syoume, Orlando Velez, Michael Spotts, and Margaret Curran, "Maryland Housing Needs Assessment and 10-Year Strategic Plan," National Center for Smart Growth, 2020, <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Documents/Other%20Publications/Report.pdf>

ⁱⁱ "2022 Maryland Housing Profile," National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2022, https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/SHP_MD.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Finio, et al., 2020.

^{iv} Maryland TANF Spending, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_spending_md.pdf

^v "Opportunities to End Homelessness and Housing Poverty in the 116th Congress," National Low-Income Housing Coalition, 2019,

https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/NLIHC_New-Congress-Memo_2019.pdf

^{vi} Finio, et al., 2020.

^{vii} "2022 Maryland Housing Profile," 2022.

^{viii} Finio, et al., 2020.

Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV



**Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony in Support of SB420
Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
February 23, 2023**

TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair; The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier, Vice Chair; and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Dr. Jeffery Johnson, Chair, Montgomery County Community Action Board

The Montgomery County Community Action Board, the County's local, state, and federally designated anti-poverty group, supports SB420 and asks the Committee for a favorable report. This bill would allow Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients who are not already receiving a local, state, or federal housing subsidy to receive a monthly housing allowance in addition to their TCA benefit.

Our board supports this bill because it works to address one of our longstanding priorities, which is access to affordable housing. Many lower-income residents struggle to find adequate affordable housing in Montgomery County and many other parts of the state. There is a very long waiting list for HOC housing vouchers and other housing subsidy programs. Many households are therefore on their own trying to find affordable housing from a very limited supply. Nearly half of all renters in the County are cost-burdened, meaning that they spend 30% or more of income on housing alone.¹ This bill can provide some much-needed support for County households who are struggling the most.

In addition to the lack of affordable housing options in our County, there is an overall extremely high cost of living that poses many challenges for lower-income households. The Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard for a single adult with one infant and one school-age child is \$116,864, which is over four and a half times the federal poverty level.² By comparison, the maximum TCA benefit for this same family is just a few hundred dollars per month, a fraction of the \$9,739 monthly Self-Sufficiency Standard. The housing assistance offered by SB420, \$350 for a household of one, and an additional \$100/month for every additional household member, can therefore make a real difference for families.

¹ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/MoCo-HNA-July-2020.pdf>

² <https://maryland-cap.org/the-maryland-2023-self-sufficiency-standard-calculator/>

Our board also supports the inclusion of a requirement in SB420 that if a household's TCA is terminated, they can continue to receive the housing allowance for six months if they receive or are eligible for SNAP. This is significant because it helps to address the cliff effect, which is *the sudden and often unexpected decrease in public benefits that can occur with a small increase in earnings*.³ Households often find themselves in a very difficult position where their earnings are suddenly higher, but not quite high enough to cover their basic necessities. We applaud this bill's effort to address this issue by ensuring that the housing assistance can continue, even if a household's TCA benefits do not.

SB420 can provide some critical assistance to many in our community. We ask the Committee for a favorable report and encourage the Committee to explore other potential policy changes that will support lower-income Marylanders.

³ [https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/introduction-to-benefits-cliffs-and-public-assistance-programs#:~:text=Benefits%20cliffs%20\(the%20%E2%80%9Ccliff%20effect,a%20small%20increase%20in%20earnings.](https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/introduction-to-benefits-cliffs-and-public-assistance-programs#:~:text=Benefits%20cliffs%20(the%20%E2%80%9Ccliff%20effect,a%20small%20increase%20in%20earnings.)

WA- SB 420 - TCA Housing Allowance - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Kligenmaier

Position: FAV



Welfare Advocates

Founded 1979

228 W. Lexington Street — Suite 220 • Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3432

Phone: 667-600-3356 • Fax: 410.889.0203

Senate Bill 420 Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance

Senate Finance Committee
February 23, 2023

Support

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

Welfare Advocates strongly supports SB 420, which requires the Department of Human Services to create a housing allowance subsidy for families on Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or Transitional Support Services (TSS) who do not receive another type of housing assistance.

Affordable housing remains one of the most critical – and difficult to secure – needs for low-income Marylanders. One of the first steps to economic security is obtaining stable housing, and there is a dire need for housing assistance in Maryland. Maryland is the 9th most unaffordable state for rental housing in the country, and the challenges of residing in a state with high living costs are borne disproportionately by low-income families, like those receiving TCA.¹ Lack of permanent and safe housing places individuals at risk for homelessness, chronic unemployment, struggling in school, and forgoing the treatment of medical needs.

TCA families are living far below the poverty line and struggle to obtain affordable, safe housing. The TCA program serves families with children who live in deep poverty, and families use their benefits to purchase food, transportation, utilities, and meet other basic needs. While TCA is a critical safety net, the benefit amount is only statutorily required to meet 61.25% of the Maryland Minimum Living Level when combined with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), leaving families who receive the full benefit still struggling to make ends meet on an amount that is – by definition – not enough to live on in Maryland. Consequently, over 1,000 families on TCA experienced homelessness in 2022.² Unfortunately, despite the overwhelming need and importance of rental assistance, the programs are severely underfunded and only one in every four eligible families are able to access federal rental assistance.³ Especially with historic inflation, now is a critical time to create and invest in a TCA housing allowance, which will give low-income families greater access to the rental market & increase the likelihood they can secure stable housing.

Creating a TCA housing allowance is an investment in the health of families and will generate cost savings for the state. Increasing a family's budget by creating a housing allowance means they can build the economic security necessary to transition off of TCA permanently. Without access to housing assistance, more TCA families will continue to spiral into homelessness and housing instability, which are public health crises that are extraordinarily expensive to address. We know that families thrive in economically secure households with stable housing, and thriving families means a thriving state. Ultimately, passing SB 420 will increase the budgets of low-income families, and improve our state's economy overall.

WA appreciates your consideration, and respectfully urges a favorable report on SB 420.

Submitted by Lisa Klingenmaier, *Chair of Welfare Advocates*

¹ National Low Income Housing Coalition 2022. *Out of Reach – Maryland*. <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/md>

² Data from the Department of Human Services.

³ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2021. *More Housing Vouchers: Most Important Step to Help More People Afford Stable Homes*. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/more-housing-vouchers-most-important-step-to-help-more-people-afford-stable-homes>

SB 420_MNADV_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Shapiro

Position: FAV



BILL NO: Senate Bill 420
TITLE: Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
COMMITTEE: Finance
HEARING DATE: February 23, 2023
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the Finance Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 420.**

With more than a third of domestic violence victims experiencing homelessness after leaving their abuser, the ability to access safe and affordable housing is paramount for victims and survivors of domestic violence. An inability to access safe and affordable housing is often an insurmountable barrier for a victim attempting to leave a domestic violence situation. Victims often remain in abusive relationships and children are exposed to ongoing violence because they have nowhere safe to go and are at risk of homelessness or housing instability.

Financial abuse occurs in estimated to occur in 94-99% of domestic violence cases and is used by an abuser as a power and control tactic. The ability to establish financial independence and afford the numerous expenses needed to support themselves and children is a tremendous barrier for victims of domestic violence and also a reason some do not leave their abuser.

SB 420 offers a housing allowance to families with children that already receive Temporary Cash Assistance or Transitional Support Services. SB 420 will allow low-income families to better access housing when needed and better maintain that stability once safely housed. This can assist victims of domestic violence in need of safe and affordable housing to escape violence.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 420.**

For further information contact Melanie Shapiro ■ Public Policy Director ■ 301-852-3930 ■ mshapiro@mnadv.org

1997 Annapolis Exchange Parkway, Suite 300 ■ Annapolis, MD 21401
Tel: 301-429-3601 ■ E-mail: info@mnadv.org ■ Website: www.mnadv.org

Economic Action Maryland_SB420_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Donnelly

Position: FAV

Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
SB 420 – Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
Position: Favorable
Economic Action Maryland

February 24, 2023

The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Finance Committee

Honorable Chair Griffith and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Donnelly from Economic Action Maryland. We are a nonprofit organization that works to advance economic justice and equity statewide through direct service, research, education, and advocacy.

We write today in support of Senate Bill 420.

Our Tenant Advocacy program provides assistance to renters and property owners in every Maryland county. We provide information on rights and responsibilities and make referrals to other organizations when necessary.

In the past few years, we've seen a dramatic rise in rents, with the average United States tenant "rent-burdened" for the first time ever, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on renting costs.¹ At the same time, rental assistance programs are closing their doors. This leaves renters in a precarious position, at risk of losing their homes or paying far more than they can afford just to have a roof over their head.

Senate Bill 420 proposes common-sense measures to protect Marylanders bearing the brunt of this crisis. If enacted, it would help ease the burden on cash-strapped households by providing a housing allowance in addition to other financial assistance. It also streamlines eligibility screening to ease the burden on households already experiencing financial distress. It could serve as one way to improve stability and reduce precarity for Marylanders. In these pressing times, making financial assistance available for pressing needs and reducing barriers to accessing assistance is necessary.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 420.

Respectfully,
Michael Donnelly Economic Action Maryland

¹ <https://cre.moodyanalytics.com/insights/market-insights/q4-2022-housing-affordability-update/>

Testimony of University of Baltimore Civil Advocac

Uploaded by: Michael Rinderman

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 420
TCA Housing Allowance Act of 2023

Hearing of the Senate Finance Committee, February 23, 2023
Maryland General Assembly
Senator Melony Griffith, Chair
Senator Katherine Klausmeier, Vice Chair

Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am Michael Rinderman, a Rule 19 student attorney in the University of Baltimore School of Law's Civil Advocacy Clinic. I am here to speak about the urgent need to pass The TCA Housing Allowance Act of 2023. The low-income clients we represent at the Civil Advocacy Clinic often rely entirely on public benefits. The cases we see include landlord-tenant issues, wage thefts, debt collections, and other financial disputes affecting vulnerable populations.

Skyrocketing costs have left low-income Maryland families vulnerable to housing instability, overcrowded living arrangements, eviction, and homelessness. TCA or TSS recipients who do not have a housing subsidy should not be left to the costs of the private market without additional support.

Who SB 420 Targets

- These families do not receive federally subsidized housing support, so they are left to fend for themselves in the private rental market. SB 420 would provide additional housing support for families who rely on TCA or TSS benefits but do not have a government housing subsidy.¹
- Most of these TCA/TSS recipients would qualify for federally subsidized housing, but they are forced into the private rental market because of the need for more availability in these programs.
- The waiting time for a federally subsidized rental is currently estimated at over 40 months in Maryland. Over 80,000 low-income Maryland families remain on a seemingly endless waitlist.²

¹ Maryland General Assembly. <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/sb0420?ys=2023RS>

² Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research. Subsidized Housing Availability Calculator. https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/assths.html#2009-2021_query

³ Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, Fair Market Calculator. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>

- The housing allowance will target those families specifically left out of existing programs. These families would likely qualify for such programs but are forced into the more expensive private housing market due to the lack of available subsidized housing units.

Rent is Unaffordable

- Rents have skyrocketed in the past several years. The average private-market rent for a two-bedroom is over \$1,500/month in Baltimore County and Anne Arundel County. And over \$1,800/month in Prince George's County.³
- Families' TCA benefits are maxed at \$727 a month, but the average rent in Maryland is over \$1500 a month and rising, leaving families dependent on these benefits out in the cold. Rent prices are rising in Maryland, even in formerly affordable areas, and Maryland is the 9th most unaffordable state in the nation.³

SB 420 Provides Stability

- Families experiencing poverty need access to housing assistance to help them afford their basic needs and maintain stable households as they build their careers.⁴
- TCA or TSS is intended to support recipients to eventually not need assistance but leaving these renters to the private market without help only reinforces their instability.
- This bill furthers the goal of the TCA program by allowing stability at home, which allows greater upward mobility in the community.⁴

Conclusion

Without access to stable housing from a federal housing program, Maryland recipients' housing instability prevents them from building a self-sustaining life. Creating more stable housing for these families should be a priority.

For these reasons, the Clinic strongly urges a **FAVORABLE report on SB420**.

For More Information, Call:

Michael Ross Rinderman
Second-Year Law Student, and Rule 19 Student Attorney
Emily Poor, Clinical Teaching Fellow, and Supervising Attorney
University of Baltimore School of Law Clinical Law Offices
(410) 837-5706

⁴ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/tanf-can-be-a-critical-tool-to-address-family-housing-instability>.

SB420 Temporary Cash Assistance Housing Allowance_

Uploaded by: Mitchell Posner

Position: FAV



For more information, contact:

Mitchell Posner, CAN Chief Executive Officer, and
Chair, Legislative Committee, MD Community Action Partnership
at 410-336-8035 or mposner@canconnects.org

SB 420 – Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
Senate Finance Committee
February 23, 2023

SUPPORT

Chair Griffith, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 420. This bill will establish a housing allowance for certain households receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA).

The Community Assistance Network (CAN) is the designated anti-poverty Community Action Agency serving Baltimore County and part of the statewide Maryland Community Action Partnership network of 17 such agencies across the State dedicated to alleviating the effects of poverty for those who are most vulnerable. CAN's mission is to work in partnership with the community to develop, operate, and support programs that reduce the vulnerability and empower personal growth, dignity, stability, and self-sufficiency among people in Baltimore County experiencing economic challenges. Throughout our nearly 60-year history, CAN has been dedicated to providing resources to meet people's basic, emergency needs so that they can take concrete steps along a path to self-sufficiency and personal growth.

Each year, CAN serves thousands of neighbors in need in Baltimore County, focusing on areas of housing, food, and economic insecurity; many of whom benefit from TCA. The stark realities of those experiencing economic challenges in Baltimore County and across the state of Maryland cannot be overstated, and the situation has only become more severe as the pandemic has persisted.

Tamesha Roberts is a single mother and TCA recipient currently living in our Eastside Family Shelter. She shares the following:

My name is Tamesha Roberts and I'm a single mother of 3 kids with end stage renal failure and living at the Eastside Family Shelter. I came to the shelter due to losing my apartment due to the increase in rent. My income was \$910 (TCA) and my rent was \$940 a month. The TCA was not enough to pay my rent along with other bills in the household. While here at the Eastside Family Shelter I've been trying resources after resources and there's no help for me when it comes to housing, and with end stage renal kidney failure I'm not able to work. And with me just receiving TCA it's extremely hard for me to get housing. So if this bill is



For more information, contact:

Mitchell Posner, CAN Chief Executive Officer, and
Chair, Legislative Committee, MD Community Action Partnership
at 410-336-8035 or mposner@canconnects.org

passed it will be a great help and a blessing to me and my kids to have a place we can call home and not worry about being homeless ever again and I can take better care of myself and pray my health gets better and I can be around for my kids for a very long time.

Additional funding through SB 420 in support of a housing allowance for TCA recipients will help families like Tamesha's all across Maryland access housing that is more affordable. Rent is considered "affordable" if it composes no more than 30% of a household's income. TCA benefits have declined in value in recent years as rents have continued to rise precipitously. Fair market rent for a 2-bedroom unit in the Baltimore area is \$1,548/month. TCA benefit amounts are variable depending on a variety of factors, but the maximum benefit for a family of three is approximately \$727. Last year in Maryland, more than 1,000 families receiving TCA experienced homelessness.

SB 420 will help families experiencing poverty by:

- Providing an additional \$350 housing allowance for eligible households of one, plus \$100 per additional household member
- Provide greater access to the rental housing market for families experiencing poverty
- Provide families with additional financial resources so they may cover their most basic needs
- Help new mothers who use TCA just after childbirth while they're unable to work with an additional safety net covering housing costs

TCA is a valuable program that needs strengthening with additional funding dedicated toward housing costs to assist Marylanders who are struggling to make ends meet.

For these reasons, we encourage support for SB 420.

MD Catholic Conference_FAV_SB0420.pdf

Uploaded by: MJ Kraska

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 23, 2023

SB 420

Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 420 requires a local department of social services to provide a housing allowance to certain households receiving temporary cash assistance; requiring the continuation of a housing allowance for a certain time period under certain circumstances; and generally relating to temporary cash assistance.

The Maryland Catholic Conferences supports policies that protect human life and dignity, strengthen families, encourage and reward work, preserve a safety net for the vulnerable, and build public/private partnerships to overcome poverty. State policies should form a "Circle of Protection" around programs that serve poor and vulnerable people in our communities and avoid placing additional burdens on people and families struggling to live in dignity. Senate Bill 420 seeks to add a housing allowance for TCA recipients and eligible individuals. Making a much-needed improvement to greatly benefit our most vulnerable Marylanders.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 420.

Mya Brown Housing Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Mya Brown

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB 420
Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
Hearing of Senate Finance Committee, February 23, 2023

Testimony of Mya Brown
Baltimore City, Maryland

I, Mya Brown, am writing a letter in support of Senate Bill 420

My name is Mya Brown and I am a single mother due to Covid-19. I am also a U.S. Army veteran. I am writing about the Housing Allowance Bill (SB 420). I feel this bill should be raised because my TCA is not enough for my daily household allowance. Right now, my car note is the full amount of my TCA. I don't have enough to take care of my personal needs, my family, or my other bills. I usually have to wait until the next month to pay bills, meaning I am always behind in my affairs. I am already living in a shelter and am already scared as it is. So any other stressors, like finances, are not good. My PTSD is already bad.

I feel very passionate about this issue. I need more aid for my daughter's needs that the shelter doesn't supply. It would help me greatly because I need it and I don't have anyone else to help me in Maryland: I only have my TCA (and food stamps). I would be forever grateful if this bill were to pass.

Please support SB 420.

Thank you.

Temporary Cash Assistance - SB420.pdf

Uploaded by: Psalms Rojas

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB420
Human Services - Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance

February 22, 2023

Senator Melony Griffith
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony of Marian House in Support of SB420

Dear Chair Griffith, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee,

Marian House is a holistic, healing community for women and their children who are in need of housing and support services. Marian House provides comprehensive support services to assist women with experiences of trauma, including poverty, substance abuse, and chronic mental health issues. **I write to urge you to support Senate Bill 420 – Housing Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance.**

Over forty years ago, Marian House was opened to provide reentry supports for women leaving incarceration as Sisters and laywomen recognized that lack of support contributed to recidivism rates. Today, we have also expanded to serve women with histories of trauma including homelessness, incarceration, neglect, substance abuse and mental health needs. Since our opening, we have assisted women who have been victims of crime in reinventing and rebuilding themselves through services such as: counseling, substance abuse treatment, job training and providing both long and short-term housing. All the women we have served have overcome obstacles on their journeys to become contributing members of society in the Baltimore area.

In FY22 Marian House served over 300 women and their children, all of who lived below poverty. Here at Marian House we believe that families and communities thrive when individuals have access to safe and stable housing. Research has shown that reducing housing instability helps improve children's health, development and education. Those who are eligible for temporary cash assistance are in a very vulnerable position and may be making decisions between housing and other necessities like food, medical supplies, school supplies, etc. By providing a housing allowance and supporting SB420, Maryland's most vulnerable populations will have greater stability, and a stronger foundation to build an independent life. On behalf of the women we serve at Marian House, I respectfully urge you to take the call to action in **SUPPORT of SB420.**

Thank you for your support,

Katie Allston, LCSW-C
President and C.E.O.

SB0420_CC_Vaughan_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Regan Vaughan

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 420 Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Calculation of Benefits

Senate Finance Committee
February 23, 2023

Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore strongly supports SB 420, which requires the Department of Human Services to create a housing allowance subsidy for families on Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or Transitional Support Services (TSS) who do not receive another type of housing assistance.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors.

As one of the largest human service providers in Maryland, we work every day with families on TCA and see firsthand the challenges and difficulties they face attempting to secure stable housing on such a limited income. We work with TCA recipients across a variety of our programs, including families who are staying at our homeless shelters in Anne Arundel and Harford Counties, families in our Head Start programs in Baltimore City, Carroll County, and Harford County, and we assist TCA parents in securing work through our St. Edwards Workforce Development Program in Baltimore. We know that TCA is a vitally important safety net program, and at the same time, families struggle to obtain affordable housing on such a limited benefit amount.

Affordable housing is the foundation of family stability, and it's exceptionally hard for families receiving Temporary Cash Assistance to obtain. Maryland is the 9th most unaffordable state for rental housing in the country, and the challenges of residing in a state with high living costs are borne disproportionately by low-income families, like those receiving TCA.¹ Lack of permanent and safe housing places individuals at risk for homelessness, chronic unemployment and forgoing the treatment of medical needs – ramifications that are extraordinarily expensive for the state to address. We see this every day at our family homeless shelters, as many of our residents living with us receive TCA, but are unable to find affordable housing. Creating a housing allowance for families on TCA will increase the likelihood our residents can secure stable housing and ultimately move out of our shelters.

Passing SB 420 will directly improve the economic security of Maryland families, and generate economic growth for the state as a whole. It is a moral imperative to bring our TCA benefit to a level that provides a more livable income through a housing subsidy. Moreover, increasing a family's budget means they will have greater financial stability, which can assist in locating work, moving off of TCA permanently, and building a secure future. Ultimately, families shouldn't have to choose which basic needs to forgo, or have to raise their children in homeless shelters.

On behalf of the individuals and families we work with, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 420.

Submitted By: Regan Vaughan, Director of Advocacy

¹ National Low Income Housing Coalition 2022. *Out of Reach – Maryland*. <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/md>

(2.22) SB 420 Human Services – Temporary Cash Assi

Uploaded by: Robin McKinney

Position: FAV



SB 420 - Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
Senate Finance Committee
February 23rd, 2023
SUPPORT

Chairwoman Griffith, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 420. This bill will help low-income families be able to afford housing.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

The state of Maryland is the 9th most unaffordable place to live in the nation. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has determined that Fair Market Rent for a 2 bedroom is as follows:

- Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County- \$1,548/ month
- Prince Georges County, Montgomery County- \$1,838/ month

While the maximum amount for Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) for a household of 3 is \$727. Fair Market Rent is unaffordable to families that receive TCA. In 2022 alone, 1,113 Maryland families that received TCA experienced homelessness. This disturbing statistic can be addressed with SB 420.

SB 420 would help low-income families be able to afford housing, while reducing the risk of homelessness. Eligibility would be for low-income families who receive TCA or TSS and do not receive a federal, state, or local housing subsidy. Eligible households will receive \$350 for a household of 1, plus \$100 per additional household member, in addition to the TCA benefit they already receive. With a housing allowance, families experiencing poverty will have greater access to the rental market and be able to cover the rising cost of rent and utilities. Not only will the allowance give families the opportunity to access stable housing, but it will allow them to maintain stability.

Financial stability is not a luxury. Stable housing is necessary for families to get back on their feet, strongly connect with the workforce, and build long-term success.

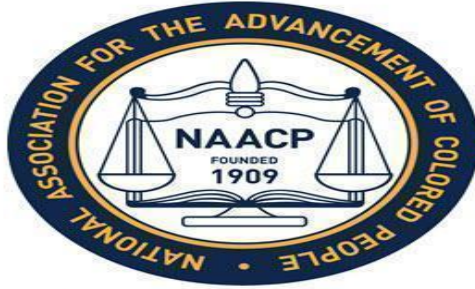
Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 420.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope

Support SB 0420.pdf

Uploaded by: Ryan Coleman

Position: FAV



Randallstown

P.O. Box 731 Randallstown, MD 21133

February 22, 2023

Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT SB 0420 Human Services-Temporary Cash Assistance-Housing Allowance

Dear Chair Melony Griffith, VC Katherine Klausmeier and Finance Committee Members:

May it be known the mission of the Randallstown NAACP is to secure equal rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and wellbeing of all persons in Baltimore County and the State of Maryland.

The modern social "safety net," including various types of income assistance and social care, has helped protect our most vulnerable citizens for decades. But today, the system is showing stress in virtually all jurisdictions. This bill closes the gap and protects the most vulnerable citizens in Maryland.

The Randallstown Branch of the NAACP urges a favorable report from the committee on SB 0420.

yours,

Ryan Coleman
Randallstown NAACP, President
<http://randallstownnaacp.yolasite.com>

Salieta G Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Salieta Glenn

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB 420
Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance
Hearing of Senate Finance Committee, February 23, 2023

Testimony of Salieta G.
Baltimore City, Maryland

I, Salieta G., am writing a letter in support of Senate Bill 420

TCA benefits are not enough to cover the cost of living. We need this housing allowance.

Right now, I receive a little under \$700 a month for a family of four: myself and my 3 daughters. Even with TCA, I find myself having to think through my monthly expenses and ask “what is a necessity?” “what can I push off?” “how long can I push it off?” Right now, I use my TCA to help cover my phone and wifi bills, as well as my electric bill. However, my phone/wifi bill was as high as \$260 and my electric bill is \$210 per month. Those expenses alone take up over half of my TCA benefit, and we haven’t even discussed other expenses: water bill, groceries, transportation, etc.

With 2 teenagers at the age where they always need things, my TCA benefit is just not enough. As a mother, I want my children to be healthy. But that requires transportation to doctors' appointments, buying vitamins to make sure my girls have healthy bones and do not get sick, and ensuring they have proper clothing for the different seasons: all added expenses that I do not have enough TCA to cover. As a matter of fact, we still need basic household cleaning items (like bleach, dish detergent, and mopping pads) that I haven’t been able to afford this month.

Even when I was working and receiving TCA, that still wasn’t enough: I had to work overtime just to make ends meet, and I could barely do that. My mother always told me to be prepared for tomorrow because anything can happen. So, I try to have \$200 left over at the end of the month just so I can be ready for issues that come up. But the truth is something big can happen very quickly and take the whole TCA benefit. For example, my children had to go a week without electricity because my benefits were interrupted, and I didn't have anything.

For a while now, I’ve learned how to make TCA enough, but the reality is, it’s not. With SB 420, I would have an extra \$650 per month and I wouldn't have to worry about simple stuff. I wouldn't have to worry about affording everything. I would not have to pick and choose what my daughters can do or choose which necessities they’ll get that month. I want my kids to enjoy being a child, and SB 420 will help me give them the normal childhood they deserve, While that \$650 won’t cover all of my expenses, anything extra will go a long way for a family like mine. Please support SB 420.

Thank you.

SB420_FAV_Hettleman.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelly Hettleman

Position: FAV



The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN

SB420 HUMAN SERVICES – TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE – HOUSING ALLOWANCE

Maryland families are struggling to find affordable housing, where most experts agree that rent should be no more than 30% of a household monthly income. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), a DC-based nonpartisan research and policy institute that focuses on fiscal and economic policies, analyzed HUD data and found that it takes years for families to get off the waiting list for federal housing subsidies. SB 420 will provide much-needed assistance for vulnerable Marylanders and will give families a bit more financial breathing room during this state and national housing crisis.

According to a study funded by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and prepared by the National Center for Smart Growth and Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., Maryland lacks approximately 85,000 rental units for its lowest income households. The study projects that between 2020 and 2030, Maryland will add an estimated 97,200 extremely and very low-income households. These projections were made immediately before COVID, which has put additional families into poverty and housing insecurity. These individuals look to our state and national leaders for help, but unfortunately, that help doesn't come fast enough.

Among the 50 largest housing agencies in America, only two have average wait times of under a year for families that have made it off of the waiting list for federal housing assistance; the longest have average wait times of up to eight years. On average nationally, families that received vouchers had spent close to two and a half years on waitlists first, exposing many to homelessness, overcrowding, eviction, and other hardship while they waited.

While Maryland currently provides temporary cash assistance for eligible recipients, these benefits are not sufficient to help cover housing costs in addition to other living expenses. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has determined that fair market rent (FMR) in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, and Anne Arundel County is \$1548/month. Similarly, FMR in Prince George's County and Montgomery County is \$1838/month. In a staggering contrast, the maximum amount of TCA available for an eligible family of 3 is only \$727. As a result, rent is unaffordable for families that receive TCA.

SB 420 provides much needed assistance to vulnerable families by:

1. Providing \$350/month for a household of one and an additional \$100/month for each additional household member; and
2. Granting this aid in addition to eligible temporary cash assistance benefits.

This additional aid will enable very low income families to afford rent and have a measure of stability and security. We should not wait for the federal government to act and let Marylanders fall through the cracks in the interim. As leaders of this great State, we have the tools to deliver relief for hundreds of Maryland families. Keeping a roof over our children's heads is the first step.

I urge a favorable report on SB 420, and I thank you for your consideration.

SB 420_MAP_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Stacey Jefferson

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 420

Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance

Senate Finance Committee

February 10, 2023

Submitted by Kali Schumitz and Mark Huffman, 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

Kali Schumitz, Co-Chair

P: 410-412- 9105 ext 701

E: kschumitz@mdeconomy.org

Mark Huffman, Co-Chair

P: (301) 776-0442 x1033

E: MHuffman@laureladvocacy.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 420, which would help Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients better afford housing by providing a monthly housing stipend.

The Maryland Minimum Living Level represents the minimal income needed for a family in Maryland to maintain a basic standard of living, including the cost of food, rent, utilities, household furnishings, clothing, personal care, transportation, medical care, and other critical necessities. The Maryland Department of Human Services calculates and sets the MLL annually. Unfortunately, income supports for low-income Marylanders do not reach the MLL, and most programs fall far below it. The combination of TCA and the Food Supplement Program only equals 61% of the MLL, and the Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP) combined with FSP only reaches 37%. Consequently, low-income Marylanders are often forced to make impossible choices – deciding which basic necessities they must forgo – because their budget is far less than what is minimally required to live in Maryland.

Housing is the largest cost for most families. The National Low Income Housing Coalition lists Maryland as the ninth least affordable state for renters. To afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in the state, a family must earn \$28.93 an hour or \$60,183 annually. A minimum wage worker in Maryland would have to work 78 hours per week, year-round.

SB 420 would provide a modest housing allowance for Maryland families who receive TCA and do not receive any other form of rental assistance. The maximum monthly TCA benefit for a family of three is \$727 – less than half of what is needed to afford market rent for a basic two-bedroom apartment, let alone cover other expenses like utilities, transportation, and clothing.

It's not surprising, then, that more than 1,100 families receiving TCA in Maryland experienced homelessness last year. SB 420 would provide a baseline housing allowance of \$350 per month with an additional \$100 per additional family member per month. This would go a long way toward helping families afford market rent so they can get and keep safe, stable housing while they are receiving TCA.

Passing SB 420 would be a major step towards greater housing stability for TCA recipients and provide a stronger foundation for economic opportunity for Maryland families experiencing poverty. **MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 420.**

***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.*

Maryland Legal Aid Testimony SB 420.pdf

Uploaded by: Yousra Elkhalfa

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND
LEGAL AID**

Advancing
**Human Rights and
Justice for All**

Senate Bill 420

Temporary Cash Assistance – Housing Allowance (Human Services)

In the Finance Committee

Hearing on February 23, 2023

Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) submits its written and oral testimony on SB 420 at the request of bill sponsor Senator Hettleman.

MLA is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to the State's low-income and vulnerable residents. Our 12 offices serve residents in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions and handle a range of civil legal matters, including housing, family law, and cash assistance to families.

Maryland Legal Aid asks that the Committee issue a favorable report on SB 420, without amendment.

SB 420 establishes a housing allowance for certain households that receive Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). Households that qualify for TCA are those with dependent children who struggle to meet the needs of their family, even though they utilize available resources.¹

Currently, there is a shortage of affordable rental homes available for low-income households.² In 2021, Maryland was short 85,000 rental units for low-income households, with the shortage expected to worsen in coming years.³ A lack of affordable housing places low-income households in severely cost burdened situations, such as having to spend more than half of their income on housing.⁴ It is estimated that 72% of low-income renter households that do not receive a housing subsidy suffer from severe cost burdens due to the cost of housing.⁵ These families often have to choose between paying rent or being able to afford other necessities. SB 420 aims to address this problem.

¹ See <https://dhs.maryland.gov/weathering-tough-times/temporary-cash-assistance/>

² See <https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/maryland>

³ See <https://www.npr.org/local/305/2021/02/18/968790273/maryland-must-build-thousands-more-homes-to-keep-prices-affordable-report-says> ; Low-income households are those that are at or below the federal poverty line.

⁴ See <https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/maryland>

⁵ See <https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/maryland>

Monthly Housing Allowance

SB 420 would reduce the impact of housing costs on low-income families by providing a monthly housing allowance for households that qualify for TCA, but do not receive another federal, state, or local housing subsidy for rent based on a portion of their income. SB 420 will prevent low-income families from having to make the terrible choice between paying rent or buying food.

Screenings for Housing Allowance

SB 420 requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to screen all applicants for TCA without a request for screening. This provision is important, because it ensures that individuals who qualify for the housing allowance will receive the financial help they deserve, without needing to be aware of and specifically ask for it. SB 420 provides that DSS cannot count a household's housing allowance when determining the amount of TCA that a household will receive. This provision ensures that households who receive a housing allowance will not have the amount of their TCA reduced simply by qualifying for a housing allowance. This enlightened policy prevents a family from trading one financial burden- the cost of housing- for another, reduced TCA.

Housing Allowance can continue after TCA Termination

TCA is time-limited to 60 months.⁶ SB 420 permits a family to receive their housing allowance for 6 months after termination of TCA, and the family remains eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This bill will directly impact a great many MLA clients with minor children. It will help to remove financial barriers for Marylanders seeking to stabilize their families, and can help to ensure that a lack of affordable housing does not obscure the chance for a better future.

Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 0420. If you have any questions, please contact Cornelia Bright Gordon, Director of Advocacy for Administrative Law (410) 951-7728; cbgordon@mdlaborg.

⁶ See <https://www.peoples-law.org/temporary-cash-assistance-tca>

SB0420_DHS_INFO.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge

Position: INFO

Date: February 23, 2023

Bill number: SB0420

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Title: **Human Services - Temporary Cash Assistance - Housing Allowance**

DHS Position: **LETTER OF INFORMATION**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written information regarding Senate Bill 420.

Senate Bill 420 would require a Local Department of Social Services to provide a housing allowance to households that are receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or transitional support services and are not receiving a certain housing subsidy where the tenant's portion of rent is based on a percentage of the tenant's income. It would also require the continuation of a housing allowance for 6 months following the termination of TCA if the household is receiving or is eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

DHS is committed to identifying supports that would benefit Maryland consumers who are challenged with the high costs incurred by current limited housing options and has the following points for consideration if Senate Bill 420 was passed: First, the housing allowance would be counted as income in determining SNAP eligibility - thereby reducing the SNAP benefit amount. Second, DHS has reviewed current data and as of February 2, 2023 has identified 10,248 households who participate in the Temporary Cash Assistance Program who would qualify for the housing subsidy. In order to meet the fiscal costs to implement the program it would cost DHS an additional \$100 million annually. The TANF block grant does not have adequate funds to support this cost, therefore, the bill would need to be supported with general funds.

Additionally, DHS wanted to make clear that the housing allowance would be provided in one of two ways:

1. Cash loaded on the customer's EBT card or deposited in the customer's bank account. Not all customers have a bank account, therefore, direct deposit is not an option everyone can consider. Customers are able to withdraw money loaded on to their EBT card from ATM machines. With the cash, they can purchase a money order to pay for rent. With this option, customers will be able to use the cash for non-rental costs, if they so choose.
2. Vendor payment made directly to the landlord or mortgage company. With this option, there would be a direct link to ensure that the funding was used as intended within Senate Bill 420.

DHS appreciates the opportunity to offer the aforementioned information for the Committee's consideration during your deliberations. DHS welcomes collaboration with the Committee on Senate Bill 420.

