



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.