



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 21, 2023

SB 136

Unemployment Insurance - Recovery of Benefits - Limitation and Methods

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 136 would amend Maryland law to provide that when the Maryland Department of Labor ("MDOL") recovers overpayments of unemployment benefits that are *not* the result of fraud ("non-fraud" overpayments), MDOL may keep no more than 50% of weekly benefit payments. If weekly benefits are \$100 or less, MDOL could keep no more than 25% of weekly benefit payments. This would provide unemployed Marylanders with some money to live on while recognizing the state's interest in recovering overpayments.

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 136 seeks to help protect Marylanders from being unfairly penalized for agency mistakes by ensuring that claimants continue to receive some minimum amount of benefit payments to cover their basic living expenses.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 136.

