

**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.