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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.