



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 02, 2023

SB 26

Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children's Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

The 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 26 requires the Maryland Department of Health to establish an Express Lane Eligibility Program by January 1, 2025, to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in the Maryland Medical Assistance Program and the Maryland Children's Health Program. Additionally, would require the Department of Human Services to enroll individuals, based on certain eligibility, in the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program and would require the Office of Home Energy Programs to enroll certain individuals in certain energy assistance programs.

The Maryland Catholic Conference urges the preservation of funding for the social safety net, especially in areas of poverty alleviation, hunger and nutrition, affordable housing, and lifesaving policies to address climate change. Senate Bill 26 seeks to 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.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a **favorable** report for Senate Bill 26.