

**House Ways & Means Committee
March 30, 2023**

Senate Bill 552: Family Prosperity Act

*****SUPPORT*****

The National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter, an organization representing social workers statewide, is asking for your support for Senate Bill 552: Family Prosperity Act, which would extend the state’s earned income tax credit and expand the childcare tax credit as strategies to lift families out of poverty.

There is growing recognition that poverty programs are child welfare programs, and an emerging body of research finding that additional income to a family is associated with a decrease in the incidence of child maltreatment and use of costly Out of Home Placement. For example, a study released this past July (Johnson-Motohama, Ginther, and Oslund, 2022)¹ investigated the effect of increasing Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The conclusion was that bringing more resources into a household had a significant impact. More resources were associated with fewer CPS calls screened in; fewer investigations that resulted in an ‘indicated’ finding; and a lower incidence of foster care placement.

Child maltreatment has not only a substantial economic cost, but an incalculable psychic cost for the affected children and their families. One way to demonstrate our state’s commitment to the children is by identifying strategies for putting more resources in hands of their parents.

Earned income tax credits are known to be a more powerful approach for lifting and keeping families out of poverty than any other tax credit program. As a result, not only can maltreatment be reduced, but health, educational, and social outcomes vastly improved.

For these reasons, we ask for your support for SB 552 to invest in better outcomes for our families and children.

Judith Schagrin, LCSW-C
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee

¹ Johnson-Motoyama, M., Ginther, D., Oslund, P. et al. (2022). Association Between State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Policies, Child Protective Services Involvement, and Foster Care in the US, 2004-2016, *JAMA Network*, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2794169>