



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

HB 547 - Family Prosperity Act of 2023

DATE: February 16, 2023
COMMITTEE: House Ways and Means Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **HB 547 - Family Prosperity Act of 2023** a favorable report.

The COVID pandemic has uncovered and exacerbated inequities across our communities. As a public-school teacher, I have seen the impact of the pandemic, and the economic turmoil that accompanied the pandemic, directly in my classes in the form of family poverty and child hunger. Action proposed in the Family Prosperity Act of 2023 addresses this head on with a permanent extension and expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit and an expansion of the Child Tax Credit.

In 2021, this body passed legislation to expand the EITC, helping more than 400,000 Maryland families. To adequately address the child poverty crises that we see throughout the state, we should make the EITC a permanent program. Likewise, the Child Tax Credit has proven to be one of the most effective tools in reducing child poverty. The federal Child Tax Credit, passed as part of the American Rescue Plan, lifted nearly 3 million children out of poverty across the country¹ according to a Columbia University study. Most families used these funds to pay for food, school supplies, childcare, and debt, according to Census data. These are the routine expenses that keep families in poverty and prevent them from saving for emergencies, homeownership, or retirement. This is the survival budget that many families throughout Maryland are unable to meet. Based on the most recent United Way of Frederick ALICE report, 40% of our county residents do not meet a survival budget, struggling to afford housing, food, childcare, transportation, and healthcare.

With the expiration of the federal Child Tax Credit, many families have found themselves in worse financial circumstances than prior to the pandemic. In fact, child poverty increased 41 percent the first month after the credit expired.²

While Maryland currently has a child tax credit, its eligibility requirements are so narrow that only 87 families in the entire state claimed the credit last year. By expanding the Child Tax Credit, we can ensure that 40,000 Maryland families receive the support they need.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 547 and I urge a favorable report.

Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD

¹ ["Child poverty drops in July with the Child Tax Credit expansion,"](#) Columbia University

² ["Absence of Monthly Child Tax Credit Leads to 3.7 Million More Children in Poverty in January 2022"](#) Columbia University