



## **HOMELESS PERSONS REPRESENTATION PROJECT, INC.**

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### **Support**

#### **SB 152 - Fishing Licenses and Stamps – Fee Exemptions – Residents Eligible for Assistance Programs**

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, January 23, 2024**

#### **Testimony of Michelle S. Madaio, Director – Economic Justice Homeless Persons Representation Project**

*The Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP) is a non-profit civil legal services organization that provides free legal representation to people who are experiencing homeless or at risk of homelessness on legal issues that will lead to an end to homelessness. HPRP regularly represents individuals and families in accessing public benefits through administrative appeals.*

SB 152 eliminates annual fishing licensing fees for residents who receive means-tested public benefits in Maryland, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) or Medicaid. These are critical anti-poverty programs that provide Marylanders who have no income or very low income with food and cash assistance and health coverage. Residents can only qualify for these programs if their income is below a limited amount. For example, the maximum gross income limit for a single adult in Maryland is currently \$1,580 per month for SNAP<sup>1</sup> and \$1,677 per month for Medicaid.<sup>2</sup> The income limits to qualify for TANF are far lower<sup>3</sup>; even when a family receives TANF, the benefit is so low the family is still living in poverty.<sup>4</sup> The goals of these programs are to assist Maryland's most vulnerable and lowest income households with critical food, health care, and cash assistance. Exempting households that receive means-tested benefits from annual fishing licensing fees would allow households that fish to keep \$5 to \$40 of their annual income to spend on food for their families.

**HPRP urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 152.** If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Madaio (she/her), Director – Economic Justice at (410) 716-0521 or [mmadaio@hprplaw.org](mailto:mmadaio@hprplaw.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of Human Services, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Mass Changes for October 2023, FIA Information Memo #24-16-revised (effective October 1, 2023), *available at* [https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/FIA/Action%20Transmittals-AT%20-%20Information%20Memo-IM/AT2024/24-16-REVISED-AT-SNAP-MASS-CHANGES-FOR-OCTOBER-2023\\_.pdf](https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/FIA/Action%20Transmittals-AT%20-%20Information%20Memo-IM/AT2024/24-16-REVISED-AT-SNAP-MASS-CHANGES-FOR-OCTOBER-2023_.pdf) (last accessed 1/19/24).

<sup>2</sup> Maryland Health Connection, “How to Enroll in Medicaid,” *available at* <https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/how-to-enroll/medicaid/> (last accessed 1/19/24).

<sup>3</sup> The maximum TANF benefit for a two-person household in MD is \$575 per month. *See* Maryland Department of Human Services, FIA Information Memo #22-31 (effective 9/1/22), *available at* <https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/FIA/Action%20Transmittals-AT%20-%20Information%20Memo-IM/AT2022/22-31%20IM%20-%20TCA,%20TDAP%20BENEFITS%20INCREASE%20UPDATE.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Gina Azito Thompson, Diana Azevedo-McCaffrey, and Da’Shon Carr, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Policy Brief: Increases in TANF Cash Benefit Levels are Critical to Help Families Meet Rising Costs,” (February 3, 2023), *available at* <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/policy-brief-more-states-raising-tanf-benefits-to-boost-families>