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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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**Testimony in Support of HB1304:
Maryland Department of Health and Department of Aging - Earned Income Tax Credit -
Distribution of Information and Training
March 28, 2024**

Madam Chair Pamela Beidle and distinguished members of the Finance Committee, it is my pleasure to come before you and offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 1304**. This bill requires state agencies that administer public assistance programs to inform individuals about the federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit.

As amended the bill aims to direct customer service representatives – at a given agency – to tell individuals who are seeking information or assistance with another public assistance program about the Earned Income Tax Credit. When someone seeks benefits in person, over the phone or online from any agency, they should be informed about the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Maryland is to be commended for creating so many programs to lift-up those with economic needs. Unfortunately, not enough is done to ensure that people seeking benefits from one agency are educated about potential benefits offered by other agencies. In particular, the Earned Income Tax Credit which provides up to \$7,430 federally and half as much from the state, is a huge benefit that it is estimated that 130,000 qualified individuals don't apply for.

Other bills have been introduced this session to expand awareness of the state Earned Income Tax Credit. I believe this bill is complementary to those efforts and will increase the odds that someone applies for this important benefit to help lift them out of poverty.

This bill had 63 bipartisan cosponsors in the House, passed unanimously, and the fiscal note was nearly eliminated. I urge a favorable report on **House Bill 1304**. Thank you.