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Health and Government
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House Chair
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB1304:
Maryland Department of Health and Department of Human Services - Earned Income Tax
Credit - Distribution of Information
March 6, 2024**

Madam Chair Peña-Melnyk and distinguished members of the Health and Government Operations Committee, it is my pleasure to come before you and offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 1304**. This bill is meant to require state agencies administering public assistance programs to inform individuals about the State Earned Income Tax Credit.

As it is currently drafted, the bill language does not reflect my original intent. I am planning to introduce an amendment to clarify that this bill only 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.

I urge a favorable report on **House Bill 1304**. Thank you.