

TAX CREDITS FOR MARYLAND FAMILIES

HB 608 - Earned Income Tax Credit - Individuals Without Qualifying Children - Eligibility
Ways and Means Committee
February 8, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity for the undersigned organizations to submit testimony in support of House Bill 608. This bill expands access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for single filers unable to claim dependents by increasing the maximum income requirement and connecting it with the state's cost of living adjustments each year.

Tax Credits for Maryland Families (TCMF) is a coalition of more than 20 organizations across the state committed to educating policymakers and the public about the state's working family tax credits, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). Our mission is to ensure every eligible individual and family receives the EITC and CTC and identify policy goals that will provide relief for low-income workers. **The coalition identifies opportunities to strengthen the state's working family tax credits and ensure the credits reach all eligible taxpayers.**

Maryland is one of the 31 states that values their hard-working, low-income citizens by offering a state version of the EITC. This credit is one of the most powerful anti-poverty tools utilized by federal, state, and local governments. Unfortunately, the credit is not as widely available for single filers who are unable to claim dependents. Right now, many young workers are not eligible to receive the EITC or receive a very small credit, which means they are taxed further into poverty. **With HB 608, we have the opportunity to make work pay for more low-income workers in Maryland, including veterans and youth aging out of foster care.**

The proposed adjustments will increase the maximum income for the state EITC to \$27,000 and will adjust to the cost of living each year, which would increase economic security for 100,000 of the lowest-paid Marylanders. HB 608 is an opportunity to help low-income single filers that do not claim dependents lessen the amount of taxes owed, and potentially increase their refund. Expanding the EITC would allow more Marylanders to claim up to \$600 during tax season. **Working family credits like the EITC also help boost local businesses as taxpayers spend tax refunds – every dollar invested in the EITC generates \$1.23 of economic activity.**

Maryland ranks 7th among the states for highest cost of living.¹ A single adult without dependents would need to make at least \$40,798 per year in order to pay for basic expenses.² Currently, Marylanders who are working full-time minimum wage jobs earn \$31,200 annually, which is too much to qualify for the EITC, even though their salary is less than the amount needed to cover basic expenses. Low-income workers, even when working 40 hours a week, are left in vulnerable positions. They are more likely to experience financial hardship. By increasing access to the EITC for single filers, Maryland has the opportunity to invest in Marylanders who need it most. **The passage of HB 608 would reduce taxes for a large majority of low-income workers, putting them on a path to long-term financial stability.**

For these reasons, the undersigned organizations encourage a favorable report on HB 608.

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/mortgages/cost-of-living-by-state/>

² <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/24>

TAX CREDITS FOR MARYLAND FAMILIES

Organizations

Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission (HRDC)
Associated Catholic Charities, Inc.
Capital Area Food Bank
CASA
Center for Urban Families
Community Assistance Network
Economic Action Maryland
Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Maryland Center for Collegiate Financial Wellness
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action Partnership
Maryland Food Bank
Maryland Nonprofits
Maryland Rise
Montgomery County Community Action Board
The Woodside Foundation
Wilmax Advisory LLC