

## **Testimony in Support of HB1490**

Hearing in the House Appropriations Committee

March 11, 2026

My name is Ms. Taylor and I've received TCA on and off over the years when I've needed it. I live in Baltimore City with my 7 children. TCA helps me cover bills and other financial needs I wouldn't be able to cover otherwise. It's important for the day to day well being of my kids.

Applying for child support was the most difficult part of applying for TCA. I was fleeing from domestic violence and I didn't know if applying would make my ex upset or come after me. Having to flee from my home and open a case against my kid's father at the same time was the biggest hurdle. It gave him an opportunity to come after me, and it made me unsafe. Without it, though, I couldn't financially support myself and my kids, and it trapped me in the relationship. One time they scheduled my child support appointment and his on the same day, so I couldn't attend. This led to the closure of my case and I had to apply yet again.

Going into the social services building feels bad - people can be very judgmental and they make you feel terrible for even applying. The day I applied, DSS gave me a rundown of what they needed from me, and applying for child support was at the top of the long list of requirements. DSS never told me there were exemptions. I found out about the exemption through advocates and other women, but DSS insisted I had to apply. Once I was working with an advocate, I even told them that a lawyer had told me good cause exemptions exist, and they still denied me and insisted it was mandatory to apply for child support. I knew my ex would be notified the day I did it.

This bill is very important for the safety and well being of women, and for them to have access to the basic necessities they need while fleeing domestic violence. You should not have to feel like your life is in jeopardy to feed your kids. No one should have to choose between safety and caring for their children. Please vote for HB 1490 so no one else has to make this awful choice.