



HB1490: Family Investment Program - Temporary Cash Assistance - Good Cause and Adequate Reason Exceptions
House Appropriations Committee
March 11, 2026
POVERTY FREE MARYLAND
SUPPORT

Voting Member Agencies:

Anne Arundel County Food Bank

Baltimore Jewish Council

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Catholic Charities

Family League of Baltimore

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services, Inc.

Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Poverty Free Maryland

Poverty Free Maryland envisions a Maryland without poverty, and a future where all Marylanders have the support and economic stability that's needed to thrive. For this reason, PFMD strongly supports HB 1490 because it will reduce barriers to families getting the support they need by clarifying and strengthening existing regulations related to the requirement that TCA participants file a child support order.

TCA is Maryland's only cash assistance program for children and their caregivers, funded by the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. More than two-thirds of TCA recipients are children, and more than half of families receiving TCA have young children, age 5 or younger. Flexible cash payments are essential for families who often have little or no other income because they can cover essentials like rent, electricity, diapers, clothes, and school supplies that more restrictive programs like food assistance don't cover.

Federal TANF regulations require that single parents applying for cash assistance file a child support order against the non-custodial parent. However, states may create and grant "good cause" exemptions to this requirement.

Maryland regulations currently offer limited good cause exemptions, but good cause is rarely granted in practice. HB 1490 will clarify and standardize the process for granting good cause to not cooperate with child support and reduce inequities by:

- Clarifying the Department of Social Services (DSS) is the agency that grants good cause (not the child support agency)
- Limiting DSS caseworker discretion to deny good cause
- Giving parents more choice and autonomy to determine whether pursuing child support is in their family's best interest
- Requiring DSS to notify families about good cause and how to obtain it

Poverty Free Maryland urges a favorable report on HB1490.

*Founded in 2025 through the merger of Welfare Advocates (established in 1979) and Marylanders Against Poverty (established in 1988), **Poverty Free Maryland** is a coalition of service providers, faith groups, and other organizations working together to exchange information, educate decisionmakers, and advocate for statewide public policies and programs necessary to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty and ensure that low-income Marylanders are provided with low- and no-barrier access to all resources needed to thrive and build a better life for the future.*

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