

The Honorable Dr. Cashenna A. Cross
Councilwoman at Large
City of Glenarden
In Support of HB 1246 With Amendments
Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit testimony in support of House Bill 1246 with amendments. As a municipal elected official serving the residents of Glenarden, I work closely with families navigating public benefits, workforce instability, and barriers to sustainable employment. The individuals most affected by gaps in information are often those who are actively trying to move forward.

House Bill 1246 requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop and maintain an Employment Training and Opportunity Database designed to help individuals locate vocational training, workforce programs, and job placement opportunities that may assist them in becoming and remaining eligible for medical assistance and nutrition support. The concept is sound. Families should not have to search across multiple agencies to find programs that can stabilize their economic position. A centralized resource improves transparency and reduces inefficiency.

However, information alone does not guarantee mobility. For this initiative to succeed, it must be structured around measurable outcomes and cross agency accountability.

First, the bill should require annual reporting on enrollment, program completion, employment placement, and measurable movement toward financial independence. Data driven governance ensures public resources produce real results.

Second, the fiscal implications must be clearly defined. Building and maintaining a functional database, along with providing enrollment assistance, requires adequate staffing and technical infrastructure. Without identified funding, implementation risks delay or dilution.

Third, municipalities must be recognized as frontline connectors. Local governments are often the first point of contact for residents seeking assistance. Formal inclusion of municipal partners will strengthen outreach and ensure community level alignment.

Finally, the current three year sunset may be insufficient to evaluate workforce stabilization outcomes. Extending the sunset to five years will allow the State to measure long term impact before discontinuation.

Our shared goal should be to create structured pathways that move individuals from dependency to stability through practical opportunity. HB 1246 moves in that direction. With the recommended amendments, it can become a measurable tool for workforce advancement rather than a passive listing of programs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report with amendments.

Respectfully submitted,
The Honorable Dr. Cashenna A. Cross
Councilwoman at Large
City of Glenarden