



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Stacy L. Rodgers, Acting Secretary

April 1, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB 989 - STATE ASSISTANCE FOR THE ELDERLY -
CALCULATION OF INCOME - POSITION: INFORMATION**

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and the opportunity to provide information on House Bill 989 (HB 989), which passed out of the House.

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. Our Family Investment Administration (FIA) is involved in the administration of and eligibility calculations for certain housing and medical assistance programs affected by HB 989.

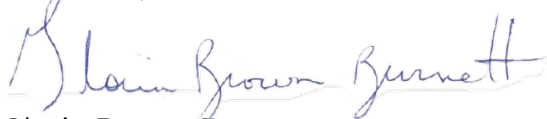
HB 989 would require the Department of Aging (DOA) to consult with DHS and the Department of Disabilities (DOD), the Department of Health (MDH), and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) on a study. The focus of the study would be the implications of prohibiting certain state housing assistance programs and state medical assistance programs from including income that an aged, blind, or disabled individual receives from renting a portion of their residence in the calculation of income required for each program. HB 989 specifies that the study would include: identifying any barriers, including federal laws; identifying necessary state resources; and determining which state housing assistance and state medical assistance programs would be applicable under a potential prohibition on including certain rental income in the calculation of an individual's income. The report on findings and recommendations would be due to the Senate Finance and House

Health Committees by December 1, 2026. DHS can participate in the bill's proposed study using existing resources.

FIA administers the Emergency Assistance to Families with Children (EAFIC) Program, which provides emergency cash assistance to families who need help paying rent or utilities or for other emergencies, and the Eviction Assistance Program (EAP), which is designed specifically to mitigate imminent loss of shelter. These assistance programs are available to eligible families when funds are available. For instance, EAFIC may only be accessed by a household once every two years. FIA also determines eligibility for individuals applying for benefits under the Maryland Medical Assistance (MA) Program, which includes individuals who are aged (i.e., 65 years of age or older), blind, or disabled. While DHS has authority to set eligibility rules for EAFIC and EAP, the MA Program is Maryland's version of the federal Medicaid program. Under current law, individuals applying for MA are subject to federal eligibility requirements, including asset and income limits. These federal eligibility requirements and the viability of excluding certain rental income from eligibility calculations are what DHS would explore under the study envisioned by HB 989.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at justin.hayes1@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gloria Brown Burnett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gloria Brown Burnett
Interim Secretary