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BILL NO:	House Bill 1490
TITLE:	Family Investment Program – Temporary Cash Assistance – Good Cause and Adequate Reason Exceptions
COMMITTEE:	Finance
HEARING DATE:	March 25, 2026
POSITION:	<b>SUPPORT</b>

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The Women's Law Center of Maryland is dedicated to ensuring the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women across the State, and through our work representing survivors of intimate partner violence we regularly see how financial control is used to maintain abuse. HB 1490 would help address these barriers by prohibiting the Department of Human Services from denying, reducing, or terminating Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) when an applicant has good cause for not cooperating with child support, and by clarifying the criteria and process for those determinations through the Child Support Administration. **We also support the amendments adopted by the House Committee.**

In Maryland, individuals who receive TCA are generally required to assign their child support rights to the State so Maryland can recoup the cost of the assistance. This requires recipients to cooperate with the Child Support Administration to locate the other parent and establish a support order, and failure to do so can result in reduced benefits. For survivors of domestic violence, however, cooperating with the child support system can place them and their children at serious risk.

HB 1490 makes the good cause waiver process safer and more accessible by allowing survivors to establish good cause through oral or written self-attestation, prohibiting requirements for third-party verification, and preventing the state from contacting the noncustodial parent while a good cause determination is pending. The bill also broadens the definition of good cause to include situations where cooperation could risk harm to the child or caretaker or would not be in the best interest of the child.

By making it safer for survivors to access critical financial assistance without jeopardizing their safety, HB 1490 ensures that the State's effort to recover child support does not come at the expense of families' wellbeing. For these reasons, the Women's Law Center urges a favorable report on HB 1490.