

DATE: March 3, 2020 **COMMITTEE:** Appropriations

BILL NUMBER: HB 1363

BILL TITLE: Human Services - Two-Generation Family Economic Security Commission

DHS POSITION: Letter of Information

The Department of Human Services (the Department) respectfully offers this letter of information regarding House Bill 1363 (HB 1363). HB 1363 would establish the Two-Generation Economic Security Commission within the Department. The Commission’s main objective is to identify services that can be coordinated to support a multigenerational approach to addressing poverty. The Commission would also submit a report on its activities, and provide recommendations for Two-Generation policies annually.

The Two-Generation approach seeks to end multigenerational poverty and build whole family well-being by intentionally linking programs, policies, and systems in order to serve parents and children together. A “parent” may be custodial or noncustodial, a grandparent, or another important person. Some families may be multigenerational and have a variety of goals, interests, and needs.

Two- Generation is a mindset, not a new program. It is an update to the way services are delivered to parents and children together, where the needs and outcomes of both are equally valued.

The journey toward adopting a Statewide Two Generation approach began in 2017, when Governor Hogan published an Executive Order establishing the Two-Generation Family Economic Security Commission. The Commission, chaired by Lt. Governor Rutherford, brought together State agencies, legislators, advocates, and parents to consider whether the Two-Generation approach could disrupt multigenerational poverty.

By the end of its work, the Commission concluded the following: (1) poverty in our State is in alignment with national trends, insofar as it is getting worse from one generation to the next, (2) Maryland is a state of abundant resources, and there should be better ways for families to identify what services are available for them, and (3) serving parents and children together is both a common sense approach to disrupting poverty and supported by growing evidence.

The Lt. Governor’s Commission recommended the supervision and evaluation of two pilot programs, one in Prince George’s County and one in Dorchester County. Both were designed to serve whole families. Those pilot evaluations have been completed and have informed the next round of Two-Generation pilot investments made by the Department of Human Services in 2019. The Lt. Governor’s Commission also recommended creating a Statewide Two-Generation Officer. The Two-Gen Officer position was filled in Summer 2019. This position is housed within the Department, and reports directly to the Office of the Secretary.

The Department continues to support the Two-Generation approach to end multigenerational poverty. We are committed to shaping and directing this work. The Department appreciates the opportunity to submit this letter of information. We hope it is useful during Committee deliberations.

