



TESTIMONY FOR SB0283

Department of Human Services - Electric Universal Service Program - Eligibility

Bill Sponsor: Senator Washington

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0283 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

There are two significant energy assistance programs in Maryland, managed by the Department of Human Services. The Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) and the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) both assist low-income Marylanders in paying their energy bills. However, the eligibility requirements are not identical between the two programs, and it is confusing for residents to know what program they qualify for.

This bill will help more Maryland families access utility assistance by requiring DHS to establish a process for Marylanders who are eligible for EUSP, but not eligible for MEAP, to apply for and receive utility assistance from EUSP. By requiring OHEP to establish procedures for households to access EUSP for those who are not eligible for MEAP, this bill ensures struggling households will receive assistance, as intended.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.