



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**February 23, 2022**

**HB 919**

**Income Tax – Child Tax Credit – Alterations and Sunset Extension**

**House Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 919. The Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, including the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington and the Diocese of Wilmington, which together encompass over one million Marylanders.

House Bill 919 extends a refundable tax credit to parents against the State income tax for up to \$500 per child for any child under the age of six. It also maintains the credit for children with disabilities who are under the age of seventeen created in 2021. The bill also would extend the income qualification requirement for parents from a federal adjusted gross income of \$6,000 or less to \$15,000 or less, annually.

The Church has long supported legislation such as Child Tax Credits that provide dignity for low-income people and their families. Furthermore, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has supported proposals seeking to “expand assistance to parents with children and improve family formation and stability.” (*Letter to Congress on Child Tax Credit*, USCCB, 3/16/2016) In the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace asserted that all persons deserve “a wage sufficient to maintain a family and allow it to live decently... There can be several different ways to make a family wage a concrete reality. Various forms of important social provisions help to bring it about, for example, family subsidies and other contributions for dependent family members...” Establishing a Child Tax Credit in Maryland is one significant and tangible way to achieve this stability for low-income families throughout the state.

Child tax credits are proven anti-poverty tools, aiming to eliminate the need for families to make the impossible and unnecessary choice between financial stability and family stability. Moving the qualification threshold up from \$6,000 could allow significantly more low-income parents to take advantage of this anti-poverty benefit. Although a \$15,000 income cap is a seemingly low limit, those who are eligible to claim the credit will notice immediate and substantial financial assistance, particularly when they have multiple dependents. Legislative proposals such as the creation of a child tax credit and the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit are important tools for achieving this assistance and combatting poverty.

It is for these reasons that the Conference respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 919.