



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 31, 2023

HB 168

Human Services - Temporary Cash Assistance - Calculation of Benefits

House Appropriations Committee

Position: Support

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 168 requires local departments of social services to disregard 100% of the amount of certain housing subsidies in the calculation of the amount of temporary cash assistance for eligible recipients.

The Conference frequently advocates for the protection of social safety net programs included in the state budget to promote the common good in Maryland. Given budget challenges that may arise in coming fiscal years, it is especially important now to evaluate how current funding is or is not meeting the needs of all programs and how they grow in their capacity to assist Marylanders. When there is a decrease in benefits for programs and grants like Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), vulnerable Marylanders will face additional obstacles to self-sufficiency due to their inability to meet their basic needs.

Given the relatively low amount of financial assistance that anti-poverty programs such as TCA currently provide to individuals and families in Maryland, legislation such as House Bill 168 is of critical importance to protect decreasing TCA benefits for our most vulnerable Marylanders.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a **favorable** report for House Bill 168.