

**House Appropriations Committee
January 31, 2023**

House Bill 168: Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Calculation of Benefits

*****SUPPORT*****

The National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter, an organization representing social workers statewide, is asking for your support for HB 168: Human Services – Temporary Cash Assistance – Calculation of Benefits. This bill proposes that the amount of housing subsidy a family may receive be disregarded when calculating the benefit level for a Temporary Cash Assistance applicant.

There is growing recognition that poverty programs are child welfare programs, and an emerging body of research finding that additional income to a family is associated with a decrease in the incidence of child maltreatment and use of costly Out of Home Placement. For example, a study released this past July (Johnson-Motohama, Ginther, and Oslund, 2022)¹ investigated the effect of increasing Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The conclusion was that bringing more resources into a household had a significant impact. More resources were associated with fewer CPS calls screened in; fewer investigations that resulted in an ‘indicated’ finding; and a lower incidence of foster care placement.

Child maltreatment has not only a substantial economic cost, but an incalculable psychic cost for the affected children and their families. One way to demonstrate our state’s commitment to the children is by identifying strategies for putting more resources in hands of their parents. Supporting HB 168 is one simple way we can do that.

Judith Schagrin, LCSW-C
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee

¹ Johnson-Motoyama, M., Ginther, D., Oslund, P. et al. (2022). Association Between State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Policies, Child Protective Services Involvement, and Foster Care in the US, 2004-2016, *JAMA Network*, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2794169>