



January 30, 2023

Maryland Senate
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of HB 111 / SB 26: Equal Access to Maryland's Medical, Health, Heat and Food Programs

Members of the Maryland Senate's Finance Committee. We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1500 members and support our local non-profits that fill necessary roles in our non-profit support and services networks. We fully support SB 26 and the help that it will bring to all the citizens in need of assistance, especially those that are critically ill, senior citizens living on meager budgets, families living in poverty or those living with a disability.

We stand with our partners in this work, Partnership for Children Youth and Families and Critical Needs Program and the Cancer Support Foundation. Programs like energy assistance, food assistance, health care and heat / fuel assistance are absolutely crucial to the very survival of these populations of Maryland citizens.

Access to these programs has been a too high of a hurdle that many simply cannot overcome. Barriers like the complicated MD Think system, access to the portal & application as well as the people trained in navigating this system, are often hard to find and benefit from their knowledge. These barriers to these necessary services should not exist. Especially as these programs impact a variety of communities including; Black, Brown, Disabled, the elderly or infirmed, Poor, Non-English Speakers, Veterans and Non-Veterans alike.

And in these early days of the early implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's future, their services are something that all of us with school aged children, and local school districts will be relying on even more heavily.

The future of Maryland's interlocking support service networks supports the lives of so many citizens. And the future care of all Maryland citizens relies on these networks and its service providers. Please support and protect the rights of citizens that struggle with a critical illness or disability with improving access to these services programs and grants. Today and into the future of the implementation of Maryland's Blueprint law. We ask the committee to please offer your full support for Senate Bill 26.

Thank you for your time, and for considering our testimony today.

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Parent Advocacy Consortium <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentAdvocacyConsortium>