



February 2, 2023

Senator Melony Griffith, Chairwoman
Finance Committee
3 East Wing
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland Inc. has voted to offer **favorable** support for Senate Bill 26 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment. **This bill is a 2023 legislative priority of the Black Caucus.**

This legislation will streamline the process by which people sign up for safety-net services such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and energy assistance programs. By establishing categorical eligibility, one application process will allow an individual to enroll in all services.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2021, 62% of adult recipients receiving SNAP benefits identified as Black/African American. To receive assistance, Maryland’s enrollees and recipients are required to submit applications and documentations for review to the relevant State agency, and severally if applying for multiple services. The current process creates unnecessary barriers for households that have limited access to internet and/or transportation yet seek to obtain safety net services to sustain and support their most basic needs. We believe that by shifting to automatic enrollment of eligible SNAP recipients, this legislation, in effect, will better help to support Black Marylanders and households in need of safety net services, including but not limited to Medicaid, Temporary Cash Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, and Energy Assistance.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports Senate Bill 26 and would appreciate your favorable support of this legislation.

Jheanelle Wilkins

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins

Chair, Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland