



HB1313 - Family Investment Program - Temporary Cash Assistance - Eligibility
Presented to the Honorable Maggie McIntosh and Members of the Appropriations Committee
March 3, 2020, 1:00pm

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the House Appropriations Committee to issue a **favorable report on HB1313: Family Investment Program- Temporary Cash Assistance - Eligibility**, sponsored by Delegate Geraldine Valentino-Smith.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. Ensuring that families have access to the resources they need to make ends meet is necessary policy. Too often enough, lower income families, especially those who are pregnant or people of color, face stigma and stricter penalties when receiving Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). Families and individuals should be treated equally when receiving TCA which allows for the purchase of basic needs, such as food, clothing, diapers, and other essentials. Families that have a need for TCA should have equal access to it and be aware of what requirements need to be met.

TCA provides lower income families with access to needed funds to purchase basic needs for their children and households. Lower income households who receive TCA have been found to have better outcomes in employment, parenting, and educational attainment by their children.ⁱ This program already requires adults to work while receiving benefits; however, there is a sanction process under state law that can adversely affect TCA families. Currently, if an adult falls out of compliance with TCA requirements, the entire family may face significant financial barriers that may be further frustrated by the compliance requirements to reinstate eligibility. HB1313 would ease sanctions imposed on certain members with a TCA family (such as pregnant women and children) when a requirement is not met by the working adult. These financial reductions on TCA members can help prevent possible child neglect or adverse effect on pregnancies. The bill would also issue a 30-day waiting period for issuing a sanction against a TCA family which can assist families in meeting the requirements again in order to receive their full benefits.

Ensuring that financial assistance for pregnant and adolescents TCA family members is crucial for their overall wellbeing. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on HB1313**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

ⁱ Arloc Sherman and Tazra Mitchell, "Economic Security Programs Help Low-Income Children Succeed Over Long Term, Many Studies Find," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 17, 2017