

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

2026

LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

Advocating for Our Communities.
Delivering Results.



ADVOCATE



COLLABORATE



ACHIEVE

Message from Executive Director Dave Kinkopf

As the Maryland General Assembly adjourned its 449th legislative session, we pause to reflect, not only on the work accomplished in Annapolis, but on the people who inspire us to continue moving forward every day.

We think of the child walking through the doors of one of our Head Start centers, eager to learn and grow. We think of the mother or grandfather receiving a warm meal at Our Daily Bread after an exhausting day of uncertainty. We think of the young person stepping into the newly opened Fugett Intergenerational Center filled with hope, possibility, and the belief that their future can be brighter than their past.

These are just some of the faces that drive our advocacy.

With changes at the federal level that impact the budget and access to critical support and services, Catholic Charities entered the 2026 legislative session with urgency, but also with hope. Across Maryland, families are doing everything they can to stay afloat, working multiple jobs, navigating mental health and substance use challenges, searching for stable housing, and struggling to afford childcare and food. Our **“Standing with Families”** agenda was built from what we hear and witness in our programs every day. It is practical, bipartisan in spirit, and grounded in what works.

Our message to lawmakers this session was clear: behavioral health must be treated as healthcare; employment and job readiness create pathways to stability; childcare is essential infrastructure for working families; and strong safety nets help communities thrive.

As Maryland’s largest private provider of human services, Catholic Charities serves tens of thousands of individuals and families each year through behavioral health care, workforce development, education, immigration legal services, housing support, developmental disability services and emergency assistance. While we witness profound need, we also see extraordinary resilience and opportunity.

We know no single legislative session can solve every challenge facing Maryland families. But progress is possible when we choose compassion over indifference and action over paralysis. By strengthening the systems that foster dignity, opportunity, and stability, we can help build a Maryland where every family has the chance to thrive.



Dave

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
The Advocacy Team	4
.....	4
Advocacy Activities.....	5
Pre-Session Work: Laying the Groundwork	5
Legislative Session Activities	5
1. Advocacy Day (January 29)	5
2. Legislator Engagement	5
3. Coalition Engagement	5
4. Weighing-in on Proposed Legislation	6
2026 Session – Political Landscape.....	7
Summary of Bills:	8
Key Dates for CC Budget Priorities:.....	9
Legislative Priorities	10
1. Behavioral Health	10
2. Childcare	11
3. Employment & Job Readiness	12
4. Keeping a Strong Safety Net	12
5. Standing With Immigrant Neighbors	14
6. Supporting Our Seniors	15
Other Bills of Note (see link for more detail).....	17
Acknowledgements	18
Advocacy Workgroup	18
Connect with the Advocacy Team.....	19

Executive Summary

During the 2026 legislative session, Catholic Charities advanced an advocacy agenda focused on **“Standing with Families.”** Guided by our six core causes: achieving independence; aging with dignity; healing trauma and addiction; empowering careers; welcoming new neighbors; and supporting families and children, this framework shaped both our legislative and budget priorities and informed our engagement with policymakers, partners, and the communities we serve.

Our Priorities

Our legislative priorities reflected the most pressing needs facing our clients and communities, with a particular emphasis on behavioral health, childcare access, workforce development, maintaining a strong safety net, and supporting immigrant neighbors. We also advocated for inclusion of \$2 million in pre-authorized capital funding to support the final phase of the new Fugett Intergenerational Center in Baltimore City, a transformative project designed to reduce child poverty and foster community growth.

Session Overview & Activity

Over the course of the 2026 legislative session, we tracked 141 bills and took positions on 29, including 12 through coalition efforts. Our team held 15 meetings with legislators and staff, participated in 123 coalition meetings, and hosted our annual Advocacy Day in Annapolis, engaging over 65 staff members and facilitating direct dialogue with policymakers. These efforts strengthened our visibility and reinforced our role as a trusted voice on issues affecting vulnerable Marylanders.

Legislative Outcomes

The session resulted in several meaningful policy wins aligned with our priorities. Key legislation was enacted to improve behavioral health systems, expand childcare access, support workforce development, strengthen public benefits, and protect immigrant communities. Notable successes include the establishment of a behavioral health provider rate workgroup, increased funding for and access to childcare scholarship and eviction prevention programs, creation of an employment training database, and several bills that offered increased civil rights protections to our immigrant neighbors.

Equally important, we successfully opposed harmful legislation, including HB 71, which would have placed unreasonable and extensive visit requirements on behavioral health providers caring for youth, and we actively engaged with the bill sponsor on HB 995 regarding the use of artificial intelligence in behavioral health, resulting in withdrawal of the bill due to unresolved concerns about the need for clearer standards.

Looking Forward: Key Lessons & Challenges

This session reinforced the importance of early engagement, coalition alignment, and clear policy implementation frameworks, especially as emerging technologies like AI intersect with care delivery. As we prepare for the next legislative session, we remain focused on protecting and advancing the programs that are vital to those we serve. We will build on this year’s progress by deepening partnerships, refining our policy positions, and continuing to advocate for solutions that are both effective and sustainable in the years to come.

The Advocacy Team

Meet the Team

Val Twanmoh, JD. Senior Advisor for Advocacy and Policy. Val served as the Director of CC's Esperanza Center for nine years, leaving in 2020 to pursue her dream of working with horses. She returned to Catholic Charities in July of 2023 to lead the work of the Advocacy Department. She brings more than 25 years of experience as a trial lawyer, hearing examiner, and People's Counsel, along with several years of service in the Baltimore office of U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski.



Madelin Martinez, MPH. Assistant Director of Advocacy. Madelin joined Catholic Charities in Fall 2023 after serving as Director of the Maryland Latino Legislative Caucus. Her prior experience included work as a Human Services Associate for the Baltimore County Dept of Health and a Medicaid Eligibility Specialist with Health Care Access Maryland (HCAM). Her background in public health and human services, combined with a strong commitment to inclusivity, helps ensure that the voices of those we serve are represented and valued in the legislature.

2026 Advocacy Fellows



Meti Negassa, MD, MPH: is a physician trained in Ethiopia and an MPH graduate from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She brings five years of clinical experience in Ethiopia and has worked as a Government and Policy Affairs Intern at the Maryland Hospital Association, as well as a Graduate Research Assistant at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. She is passionate about addressing social determinants of health and advancing healthcare equity through advocacy and policy.

Sarah Katvala: is a student pursuing her Masters of Social Work at Boise State University. She brings 12 years of international development and anti-human trafficking experience to this role. Prior to the Advocacy Fellowship, she interned at My Sister's Place Woman's Center in Baltimore, Maryland. She took part in an Advocacy 101 training where she learned about the opportunity to marry her micro and macro interests when it comes to serving communities in the behavioral health space.

Advocacy Activities

While the legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly officially begins on the second Wednesday in January, the work of the Advocacy Department that focuses on impacting State legislative and budgetary issues begins months before opening day and continues right up until the closing minutes on Sine Die.

Pre-Session Work: Laying the Groundwork

- ✓ Conducted outreach and relationship-building with key legislators and coalition partners
- ✓ Scheduled and/or attended 21 meetings to discuss the work of the agency and introduce our new Executive Director to state legislators, county executives, Baltimore City Mayor and councilmembers, and members of the Governor’s cabinet
- ✓ Identified policy priorities aligned with Catholic Charities’ mission
- ✓ Prepared materials and strategies to support the “Standing with Families” agenda and capital budget requests
- ✓ Planned and conducted “Advocacy 101” Training for interested staff to foster understanding of and engagement in the agency’s advocacy efforts on behalf of clients and colleagues. 16 staff from across the agency attended the training, and a follow-up survey showed a 4.8/5 satisfaction rate among respondents.

Legislative Session Activities

1. Advocacy Day (January 29)

The Advocacy Team organized and led the annual Catholic Charities’ Advocacy Day in Annapolis, which included presentations from key state leaders and partners:

- ◇ Speaker of the House, Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk
- ◇ MD Dept. of Health/Director of Maryland Medicaid, Perrie Briskin
- ◇ Maryland Eviction Prevention Funds Alliance Director (MEPFA) Matthew Hill
- ◇ Governor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs Program Director Mayra Loera
- ◇ Executive Director of the Maryland Latino Legislative Caucus, Jason Avila
- ◇ Sarah’s House Program Director Kelly Anderson

Participation and Impact:

- Over 65 Catholic Charities staff attended
- 32 staff participated in direct meetings with legislators (“lobby day”)

2. Legislator Engagement

Over the course of the 90 days of session, the Advocacy Team met with 16 lawmakers and their staff to advance the “Standing with Families” agenda and advocate for capital and operating budget priorities, in addition to providing information packets to all members of the capital budget subcommittee members in both the Senate and the House.

3. Coalition Engagement

The Advocacy Team actively participated in 123 coalition meetings throughout the legislative session, strengthening partnerships and aligning efforts across the state. Coalitions engaged included:

- LeadingAge Maryland
- Maryland Association of Nonprofits
- Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network
- Medicaid Advocates Group
- Budget Brain Trust
- Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth
- Poverty Free Maryland
- Maryland Eviction Prevention Funds Alliance
- Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition
- Children's Behavioral Health Coalition
- Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
- Legislative Coalition
- Baltimore Immigrant Resource Alliance

The team participated in partner coalition-sponsored lobby days, including Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS), and Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition, as well as CASA's.



**Behavioral Health Rally
February 26, 2026**



**Developmental Disabilities Day
February 18, 2026**

4. Weighing-in on Proposed Legislation

Fundamentally, advocacy at Catholic Charities involves providing information and persuasive argument on issues that impact our programs, our staff, and the people we serve. In addition to engaging legislators directly on proposed legislation, other forms of advocacy included:

- ✓ Preparing written testimony in support of bills that support our clients and help to advance our Standing with Families agenda
- ✓ Arranging for expert Catholic Charities' staff to provide oral testimony at several bill hearings
- ✓ Together with the Medicaid Advocates Group, the Advocacy Team presented to select staff of the Department of Legislative Services regarding the impacts of the federal legislation (HR 1, "OBBA") on providers of Medicaid-funded services and the patients who need them.

2026 Session – Political Landscape

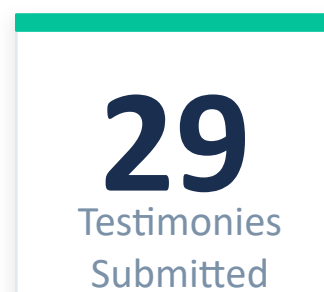
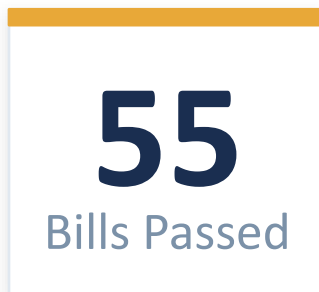
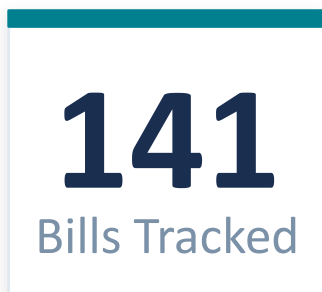
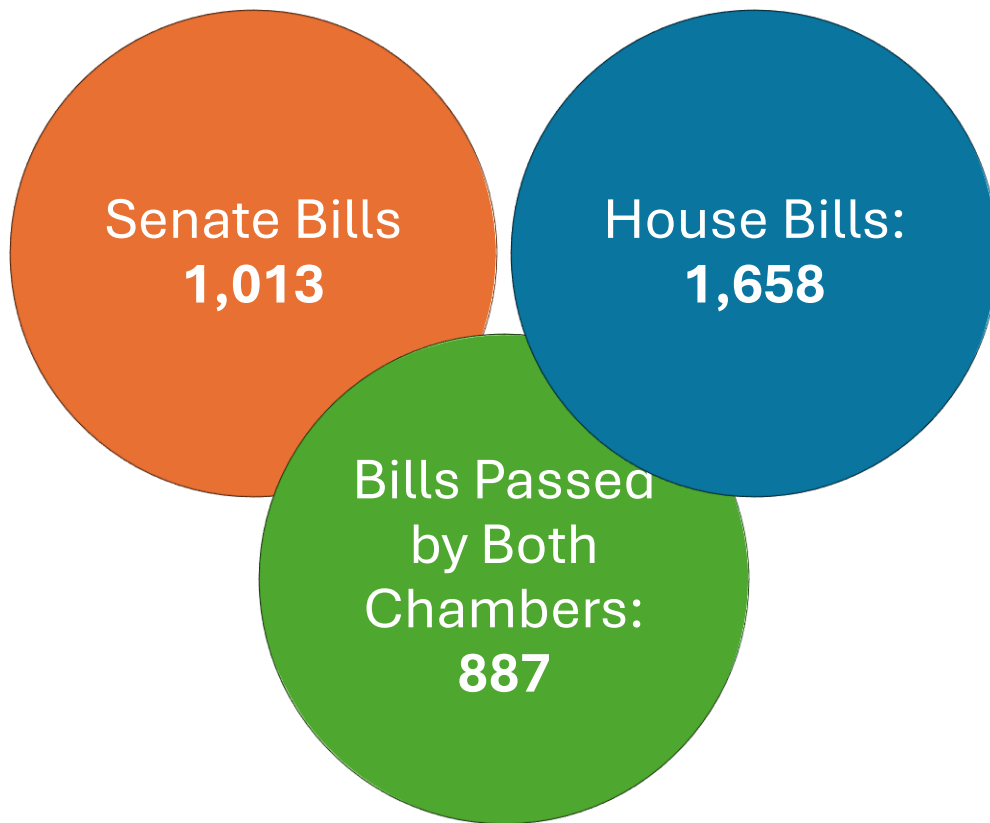
The 2026 Legislative Session of the Maryland General Assembly convened on January 14, 2026 and adjourned on April 13, 2026, with many of the legislative decisions coming during the last few days of the session. Perhaps due in part to the tumult on the national scene in terms of the economy, immigration enforcement, and new federal requirements for participation in safety net programs that threaten to reduce access to health care, food assistance and other critical needs, the 2026 Legislative Session seemed less chaotic, more coordinated, and, with the exception of the redistricting issue, more like-minded between the Governor's office and the legislators than last year's session.

Overall, for Catholic Charities programs and the people we serve, there were far more successes than losses: increased funding for child care and eviction prevention; no cuts

to provider rates for behavioral health and senior services; additional capital funding for our Fugett Intergenerational Center; legislation offering greater protections for our immigrant neighbors; creation of a workforce database for people seeking employment, and more. Together with many partner coalitions, we helped to ensure the passage of several impactful bills and funding allocations, as you can see in more detail below.

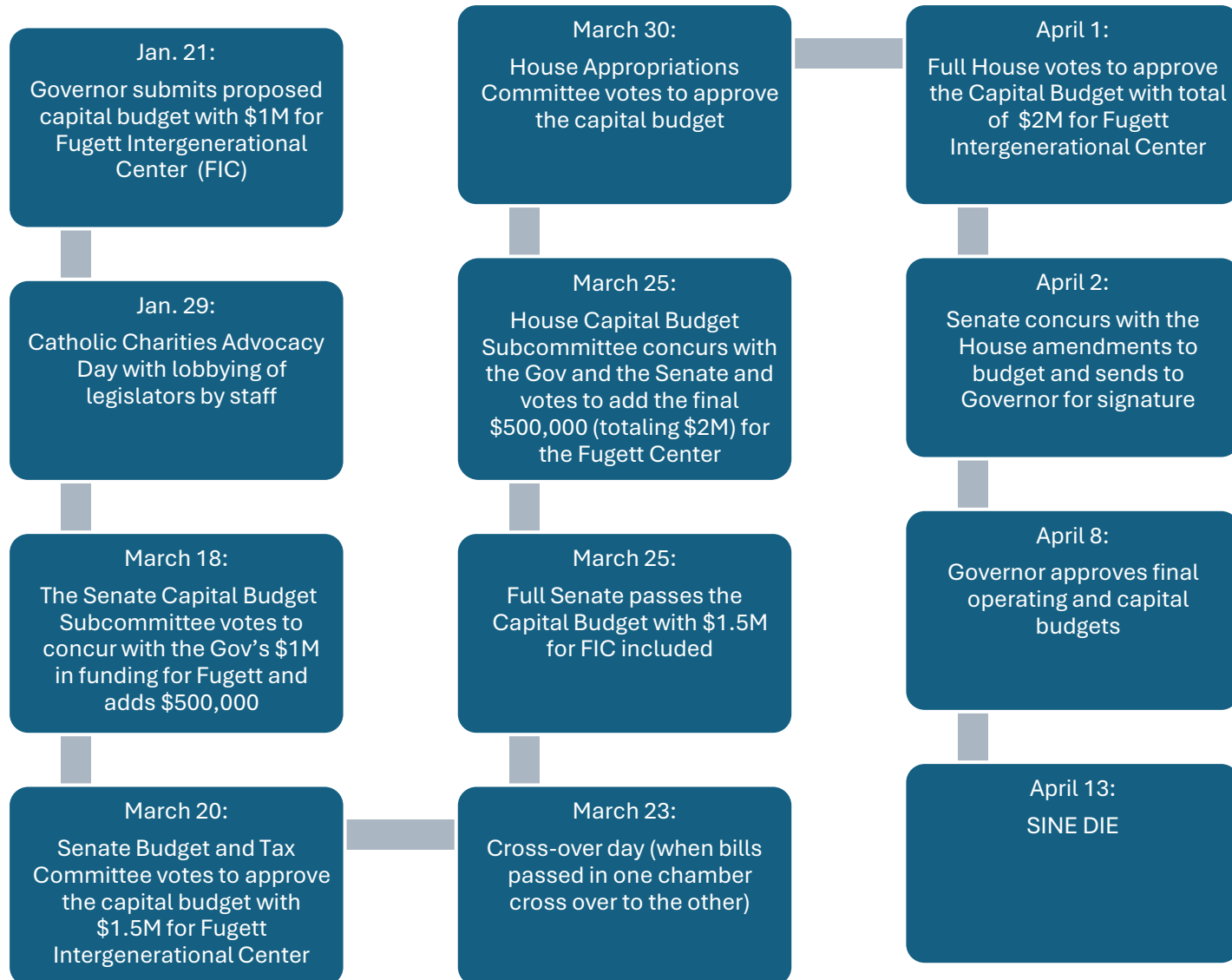


Summary of Bills:



Bill Pass Rate 55 of 141 tracked bills passed (39%)

Key Dates for CC Budget Priorities:



Legislative Priorities

These are the bills that we weighed in on that have passed and how they would impact our programs and the people we serve:

1. Behavioral Health

HB0772 Workgroup on Behavioral Health Rate Methodology Modernization – Establishment

Establishes the Workgroup on Behavioral Health Rate Methodology Modernization Act in the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) to develop transparent, cost-based reimbursement methodologies for certified community behavioral health clinics (CCBHCs), outpatient mental health centers, and independent outpatient providers.

Impact

CC's Villa Maria Behavioral Health program is the second-largest nonprofit provider of behavioral health services in Maryland. Our 225 counselors and psychiatric rehabilitation specialists serve more than 3,500 patients across eight Maryland counties and Baltimore City through community schools, stand-alone clinics, and telehealth. Rising costs, including inflation, competitive salaries, benefits, and utilities, combined with outdated reimbursement structures are placing significant strain on providers. By establishing this workgroup, sustainable solutions can be found using data-driven rate recommendations to help ensure that rates of reimbursement keep pace with the cost of providing services, including competitive non-profit staff compensation and rising administrative costs.

SB0238 School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact

Authorizes licensed school psychologists who hold multistate licenses to provide school psychological services in member states. This establishes clear requirements for multistate licensure and establishes the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact Commission.

Impact

Supported through our partner coalition, the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD), to allow school psychologists licensed in states that are part of the Compact to work in Maryland, and Maryland psychologists to work in those same states. Data from a 2024 state assessment of Maryland's behavioral health workforce highlights an escalating crisis in access to care. The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a psychologist to student ratio of 1:500. In 2022-23, Maryland's ratio was 1:1,053. Interstate licensure compacts increase access to care by adding depth to local labor pools.

HB0854 School Construction - Nonpublic Special Education School Renovation Program – Established

Creates a state grant program to help nonpublic special education schools pay for building renovations and improvements. The program is run by the Interagency Commission on School Construction, which will prioritize projects that improve student health and safety, meet state

education standards, or serve a high number of Maryland students. It also establishes the intent that the state should invest at least \$5 million each year and requires rules to be set for how the program operates.

Impact

CC's Villa Maria School and the Villa Maria School Type III Diagnostic Program at St. Vincent's Villa, a short-term residential facility are programs of Catholic Charities that serve students in kindergarten through 8th grade who have experienced significant emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges. 100% of our students are referred by local school systems. We serve students whose needs cannot be met in traditional public-school settings. The children are referred to our school through the IEP process and have been approved for a nonpublic special education setting due to the intensity of their social/emotional, and academic needs. As a non-public special needs school and treatment center, our programs were not previously eligible for state school construction funding. Establishing the Nonpublic Special Education School Renovation Program creates grant funding opportunities to address the unique environmental and safety needs of our Villa Maria and SVV programs.

2. Childcare

HB0849 Child Care Scholarship Program - Freeze in Enrollment – Exceptions

Prohibits the freeze on enrollment in the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program from applying to:

- An individual or family who is enrolled in the temporary cash assistance (TCA) program;
- An individual or family who is enrolled in the federal temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) program;
- A child, parent, or caregiver who is enrolled in the federal social supplemental security income (SSI) program;
- The sibling of a child who is enrolled in the program; and
- A child who is homeless

Impact

Provided support and testimony through partner coalition **Poverty Free Maryland** to ensure parents have continued access to childcare services to combat poverty. Often, a barrier to sustainable and full-time employment is the availability and affordability of reliable childcare services, and a total freeze on enrollment in the childcare scholarship program negatively impacts those who may need it most.

HB 1321 — Child Care Scholarship Program: Application Process and Copays

Prohibits an enrollment freeze in the Child Care Scholarship Program from including certain individuals. It requires the State Department of Education to create and manage a waitlist, prioritizing specific applicants for enrollment. Additionally, the Department must identify applicants who may qualify for publicly funded prekindergarten, notify them, and help them enroll when possible; and limits copay amounts for certain program participants.

Impact

Through our Head Start programs, Catholic Charities sees firsthand that access to affordable, high-quality childcare remains one of the most significant barriers facing working families. The Child Care Scholarship program is a critical support that allows parents to remain in the workforce, pursue economic mobility, and connect their children to early learning opportunities that set the foundation for lifelong success.

3. Employment & Job Readiness

SB0772/ HB1246 — Maryland Department of Health: Employment Training and Opportunity Database

Establishes a centralized Employment Training and Opportunity Database to connect individuals with employment training and support programs, helping them achieve and maintain eligibility for Medicaid and SNAP. Requires enrollment assistance and coordination across state agencies, ensuring individuals are not left to navigate complex requirements on their own.

Impact

Catholic Charities has long been engaged in workforce development and employment support. Over the past year, 600 individuals utilized our workforce development services, 312 secured employment, and 82 received an industry-recognized certification. Our experience demonstrates that 'one-stop shop' models integrating employment, education, and benefits support are far more effective than fragmented systems — holistic, hands-on assistance improves compliance, increases engagement, and leads to better long-term outcomes. This bill reflects those proven best practices. With Medicaid work requirements potentially placing an estimated 9.9 to 14.9 million people nationwide at risk of losing coverage by 2034, a centralized, regularly updated database paired with enrollment assistance will help Marylanders secure work, build skills, and maintain access to vital health and nutrition benefits.

4. Keeping a Strong Safety Net

HB0648 Office of Home Energy Programs - Uniform Redetermination Process - Age

Reduces the age to qualify for certain redetermination for enrollment in energy assistance programs from age 65 to age 60.

Impact

Around 1,760 Maryland households with a member age 60-64 that currently receive OHEP assistance are eligible for the streamlined redetermination process. With rising energy costs for all, this bill will ensure more older people continue to receive critical utility benefits without interruption.

HB0315/SB0335 Landlord and Tenant - Discrimination in Housing - Income-Based Housing Subsidies

Prohibits certain landlords from refusing to rent to prospective tenants who pay rent with assistance of income-based housing subsidies under certain circumstances.

Allows for landlords to collect financial information but ensures that tenants are protected under the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights if discriminatory housing practices are used.

Impact

Research and federal guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development indicates that relying on credit scores for assisted tenants disproportionately harms Black renters, women-led households and low-income families. By eliminating credit screening for housing assistance recipients while still allowing landlords to assess applicants using relevant criteria such as rental history, landlord references and verified eviction outcomes – tenants are not penalized for past credit issues and landlords retain a more accurate and fair assessment of tenant risk.

HB 1490 — Family Investment Program: Temporary Cash Assistance, Good Cause and Adequate Reason Exceptions

Strengthens protections for families applying for Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) by prohibiting the Department of Human Services from denying, reducing, or terminating benefits when an individual has good cause or an adequate reason for noncooperation with child support. And requires the child support enforcement agency to determine that there is adequate reason for noncooperation using certain criteria which the Secretary of Human Services is required to establish.

Impact

As the largest private provider of human services in Maryland, Catholic Charities' Head Start programs serve over 800 children and 700 families across 12 sites, supporting children and families from low-income households in all aspects of life. For some families, lived experiences make pursuing child support harmful to themselves and their children. Yet the need for financial assistance remains urgent. Maryland's own data reflects this reality: in April 2024, 74% of TCA applications were denied by DHS, and of those denials, 548 families were turned away due to noncooperation with child support requirements. These are families who applied to meet basic needs but did not feel safe pursuing child support. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reports that 11% of Maryland's children live in poverty, children who should not be denied financial support because of the circumstances into which they were born. By strengthening good cause exemptions, HB 1490 allows parents to make decisions in the best interest of their children and takes a meaningful step toward reducing childhood poverty in Maryland.

SB 0729 / HB 1571 — Real Property Access to Counsel in Evictions Program: Expansion

Expands the Access to Counsel in Evictions Program to extend legal representation and supportive services to individuals living in mobile home parks and authorizes prospective residents to take legal action when essential documents or disclosures are withheld.

Impact

Mobile home residents often face unique vulnerabilities, including complex tenancy laws and power imbalances between residents and park owners. In mobile home communities, residents often own their homes but rent the land — creating distinctive risks when legal protections are weak or unclear. Expanding access to legal counsel helps stabilize households, prevent unjust evictions, and reduce the long-term social and economic costs associated with housing insecurity.

Families who receive legal support are more likely to remain housed, avoid homelessness, and protect their financial well-being. When communities experience fewer evictions, neighborhoods remain stable, local schools and businesses benefit, and social safety nets experience less strain. For Catholic Charities, housing is more than a commodity — it is a basic human need essential to safety, stability, and family life. Expanding these legal protections reflects our commitment to defending the dignity of every person and promoting the common good, especially for those who face structural disadvantages in the housing market.

SB0244 Code Revision – Health- Maryland Medical Assistance Program

Revising, restating, and recodifying the laws of this State relating to the Maryland Medical Assistance Program.

Impact

Updates code language for Maryland’s Medical Assistance program to reaffirm state-level standards. This bill had no fiscal impact. It was passed to clarify language, for example substance use terminology being changed from “substance abuse” to “substance use disorder” to better reflect the verbiage in line with current evidence-based research from behavioral health communities.

5. Standing With Immigrant Neighbors

SB 0245 / HB 0444 — Public Safety Immigration Enforcement Agreements: Prohibition

Prohibits the State, units of local government, county sheriffs, and their agencies, officers, employees, and agents from entering into immigration enforcement agreements. Requires the immediate termination of any existing immigration enforcement agreements on or before July 1, 2026.

Impact

As the largest private provider of human services in Maryland, Catholic Charities is deeply committed to supporting immigrant communities through our Esperanza Center and other programs, including Head Start and meal programs. Since 1963, the Esperanza Center has served as a vital resource for immigrants, offering comprehensive services through a dedicated team of staff and volunteers.





287(g) agreements and similar arrangements that authorize local law enforcement to act as federal immigration officers are harmful to communities create fear and distrust.

Studies show that immigrants are significantly less likely to report crimes in jurisdictions with these agreements, undermining public safety for everyone. Recent federal enforcement practices have expanded ICE operations into previously protected spaces, including churches, schools, and courthouses, discouraging individuals from participating in the justice system. SB 0245 establishes clear protections for immigrant communities and citizens alike and is essential to maintaining trust between immigrant residents and their local institutions.

6. Supporting Our Seniors

SB 0530 / HB 0811 — The Village Multigenerational Third Places Act

Authorizes the Department of Aging to award grants to nonprofit organizations and area agencies on aging to support social connection for individuals in aging-in-place programs through events and gatherings at multigenerational third places.

Impact

The Carolyn E. Fugett Intergenerational Center in West Baltimore, Catholic Charities newest program, exemplifies the type of multigenerational third place envisioned by this bill, creating opportunities for meaningful engagement across generations to reduce isolation, improve well-being, and strengthen community stability. The need for increased access to intergenerational programs has never been more urgent. According to AARP, nearly one in four adults aged 65 and older report not having enough close friends. Intergenerational programming offers a proven solution: programs that bring older adults and younger generations together improve emotional well-being, reduce loneliness, and support mental and physical health. HB 0811 represents an important investment in the health, independence, and well-being of Maryland's aging population.

HB 1434 — Maryland Department of Health: Caregiver Resource Webpage

Requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop and maintain a caregiver resource webpage, providing caregivers across the state with information and resources.

Impact

With Maryland's aging population rapidly growing and much of long-term care delivered by family members, this bill fills a critical gap. Currently, caregivers must navigate a patchwork of agency

websites, program portals, and nonprofit resources to find the information they need. By establishing a single, reliable point of access, HB 1434 will make Maryland's systems more navigable and more responsive to the thousands of families who provide essential care every day, ensuring they have quick, accurate, and accessible information to help support their loved ones.

SB 0753 / HB 1008 — Vulnerable Adult Banking Protection Act

Authorizes fiduciary institutions to delay or deny certain account disbursements under certain circumstances. It requires institutions to share relevant financial records with designated entities in certain situations and permits them to contact appropriate individuals as needed; also grants fiduciary institutions immunity from liability when acting in accordance with these provisions.

Impact

Maryland's older adults are particularly vulnerable to financial exploitation, and families often struggle to intervene in time. The scale of this crisis is significant: in 2024, Maryland saw 44,195 fraud reports with total losses reaching nearly \$202 million. Losses among Marylanders age 60 and older have risen sharply — from \$9.8 million in 2020 to \$46.9 million in 2024. Financial exploitation often occurs quickly, and a brief pause in a suspicious transaction can make the difference between prevention and devastating loss. SB 0753 also allows institutions to alert a trusted contact — such as a family member or caregiver — when concerns arise, creating an essential early-warning channel. For the older adults and vulnerable individuals Catholic Charities serves, this bill provides a meaningful, practical layer of protection from fraud and theft.

Other Bills of Note (see link for more detail)

Behavioral Health

- [HB0071 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program Services - Reimbursement \(Youth Psychiatric Rehabilitation Parity Act of 2026\)](#)
- [HB0995 Health Occupations - Behavioral Health Care Providers - Use of Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [SB0490 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Step Therapy, Fail-First Protocols, and Prior Authorization - Prescription Drugs to Treat Serious Mental Illness](#)

Childcare

- [HB0635/SB0359 Child Care Facilities – Criminal History Records Check – Requirement](#)

Employment & Job Readiness

- [SB0305/HB0507 Incarcerated Individual Training and Reentry Grant Fund - Extension](#)
- [HB0864/SB0964 Maryland Workforce Apprenticeship Utilization Act](#)
- [HB0297 Adult Education High School Diploma Pathways GED Option Pilot Program and MDiplomaWorks Pathway](#)

Keeping a Strong Safety Net

- [HB0382 Maryland Broadband Opportunity and Fairness Act](#)
- [HB0440 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Individuals With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities - Provider Reimbursement](#)
- [Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations – Establishment](#)
- [SB0113/HB0278 Human Services - Department of Aging and Commission on Aging \(The Longevity Ready Maryland Act\)](#)

Standing with Immigrant Neighbors

- [HB0309 Judicial Facilities - Stops, Detentions, and Arrests – Limitations](#)
- [HB1458 State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Refugees and Asylees – Establishment](#)
- [SB0791/HB1575 Community Trust Act](#)
- [SB0792 Hospitals - Immigration Enforcement Action - Policy Requirement](#)
- [SB0810/HB1341 Public Schools - School Security Personnel - Immigration Investigation and Enforcement](#)
- [HB1530 Higher Education - Undocumented Students - Out-of-State Tuition Exemption Eligibility](#)

Other

- [HB0903 Income Tax - Subtraction Modification - Donations to Food Banks and Other Charitable Entities](#)
- [HB1536 Maryland Enforcement Limits and Transparency \(MELT\) Act](#)

Acknowledgements

Advocacy Workgroup

The purpose of the Advocacy Workgroup is to serve as advisory group to the Advocacy Team both during and after session, to enhance collaboration with coalitions and help inform agency advocacy regarding program and client needs and legislative impacts.

Members

1. Andy Wayne, Director of Communications
2. Cherie Melton, Director, St Ann Day
3. Daniel Plakosh, Principal, Villa Maria School
4. Darcy Boegner, Director of Talent Experience (HR)
5. Diamond Moore, Senior Services, Resident Services Compliance Coordinator
6. Erin Finnegan-Smith, Director, Workforce Development
7. Ezra Buchdahl, Administrator, Villa Maria School
8. Heidi Rash, Director, Performance Management
9. Janeba Barry, Case Manager, Dundalk Community Support Center
10. Kate Fahey, Nurse Manager, Family Services Division CFSD
11. Katie Kemp, Administrator, Gallagher Services
12. Katrin DeCamp, Director, Annual Giving-Development
13. Kelly Anderson, Program Director, Sarah's House
14. Kevin Creamer, Director Intergenerational Center
15. Kevin Keegan, Director, Family Services Division
16. Lena Leone, Community Engagement Coordinator Mission Integration
17. Manuel Hidalgo, Program Director, Esperanza Center
18. Mary Choplick, Director, Senior Services Division
19. Mikael Kristiansen, Director, Safe Streets

Special Thanks to the following staff who provided invaluable expertise and assistance with testimony:

- Kevin Keegan
- Mary Choplick
- Kelly Anderson
- Erin Finnigan-Smith
- Heidi Rash
- Karen Kleiman-Jones
- Jill Kratz
- Agatha Callahan
- Dan Plakosh
- Kevin Creamer
- Karen Haughey

Additional thanks to our active coalition Partners as seen on page 5 of this report.



CHERISHING THE DIVINE WITHIN ALL

Connect with the Advocacy Team

Have questions about Catholic Charities' advocacy priorities, legislative engagement, or ways to get involved? We welcome staff, partners, and community members to reach out.

Advocacy Team Contact Information

Val Twanmoh

Senior Advisor for Advocacy and Policy

vtwanmoh@cc-md.org

Office Telephone: 667-600-2870

Madelin Martinez

Assistant Director of Advocacy

mmartinez@cc-md.org

Office Telephone: 667-600-2453

If you want to know more about Catholic Charities of Baltimore

Visit the Website: <https://cc-md.org/>