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Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
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Interfaith Works
Jewish Community Relations Council
of Greater Washington
Job Opportunities Task Force
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Maryland Budget & Tax Policy Institute
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Maryland Hunger Solutions
Maryland Interfaith
Legislative Committee
National Council on Alcoholism & Drug
Dependence – Maryland Chapter
Public Justice Center
St. Vincent de Paul Society
United Way of Central Maryland
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Maryland Alliance for the Poor

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STATEMENT ON THE FISCAL 2011 BUDGET MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Health and Human Resources
Wednesday, March 3, 2010**

Submitted by Branden McLeod

The Maryland Alliance for the Poor (MAP) is a statewide network of advocacy organizations, service providers, and faith communities working together to advocate on behalf of Marylanders living in or near poverty. MAP has grave concerns about the Governor's proposed budget for the Child Care Subsidy Program, which is cut by approximately \$10 million to a FY 11 allowance of \$93,686,894. Child care subsidy is absolutely vital to low-income families struggling to enter or remain in the workforce. Our fear is that the State will impose a freeze on enrollment for non-TCA families.

The last time the State froze enrollment, in January 2003, the freeze lasted two and three-quarter years. At one point, more than 20,000 children were on the wait list—a higher number than the program was serving at that time. Freezing child care subsidy leaves low-income working parents with few options, none of them good. They may pull older children out of school, leave the young ones to fend for themselves at home or in shopping malls, or avail themselves of more dangerous, often illegal, child care options.

Cost containment may be necessary, but it is inconsistent for the State to express a commitment to restoring jobs while at the same time cutting child care subsidy. Additional cuts to the Division of Early Childhood Development budget—specifically to the State's networks of Family Support Centers and Child Care Resource Centers—may also threaten important support programs for low-income families and child care providers.

MAP urges the Governor and the General Assembly to protect this critical infrastructure and to restore funds for the Child Care Subsidy Program as quickly as possible.