



**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE**

January 22, 2020

Senate Bill 153: Criminal Law - Abuse or Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult -  
Causing Severe Emotional Distress  
*Written Testimony*

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

On behalf of the members of the Health Facilities Association of Maryland (HFAM), we appreciate the opportunity to express our opposition for Senate Bill 153. HFAM represents over 170 skilled nursing centers and assisted living communities in Maryland, as well as nearly 80 associate businesses that offer products and services to healthcare providers throughout the state. Our members provide services and employ individuals in nearly every jurisdiction in the state. HFAM members provide quality and cost-efficient care to the majority of the 5.8 million total Medicaid patient days in Maryland skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers annually.

Senate Bill 153 seeks to prohibit abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult that causes severe emotional distress, alters the definition of abuse of a vulnerable adult to include the causing of severe emotional distress resulting from a course of conduct by another, and broadens actions that constitute abuse.

Causing severe emotional distress in a vulnerable adult is indeed abuse, and sadly it most often occurs at home, often between family members. In the long-term and post-acute care setting, current regulations require that documented abuse of any kind be cited appropriately as a violation; rightfully so. It is appropriate that SB 153 broadens the definition of abuse to include the causing of severe emotional distress and focuses on the act of abuse and neglect at home and in all settings.

**For this reason, we respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 153.**

*Submitted by:*

Joseph DeMattos, Jr.  
President and CEO  
(410) 290-5132