



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

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Senate Bill 0153
In Support Of
Criminal Law – Abuse or Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult – Causing Severe Emotional Distress
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Hearing: January 22, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

Dear Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, and Honorable Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair, and Distinguished Judicial Proceedings Committee members,

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) Legislative Priorities include preventing abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and support of legislation to reduce crime and violence against seniors.

We urge your support of SB 0153 Criminal Law – Abuse or Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult – Causing Severe Emotional Distress. This bill would alter the definition of abuse in existing law (MD Code Family Law 14-302 and 14-101) which prevents or remedies neglect, self-neglect, abuse, or exploitation of vulnerable adults who are unable to protect their own interest and are at risk of immediate harm to their own person or to others. It focuses on actions that would cause severe emotional distress to the vulnerable adult.

Specifically, it:

- Prevents deceptive or misleading statements made with a malicious intent toward the vulnerable adult
- Destruction or harm to an animal owned by a vulnerable adult
- Malicious distribution display or transmission of information about the vulnerable adult on social media without permission.

It should be noted that pets are family to many adults, including vulnerable adults. Threatening or doing harm to defenseless animals is defenseless in any situation and should be treated accordingly under the law.

On behalf of the almost 14,000 members of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, we urge your support of SB 0153.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie Downey
President

Virginia Crespo
Legislative Aide