



# *Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network*

## **MSCAN**

*AARP Maryland*

*Alzheimer's  
Association,  
Maryland Chapters*

*Baltimore Jewish  
Council*

*Catholic Charities*

*Central Maryland  
Ecumenical Council*

*Church of the Brethren*

*Episcopal Diocese of  
Maryland*

*Housing Opportunities  
Commission of  
Montgomery County*

*Jewish Community  
Relations Council of  
Greater Washington*

*Lutheran Office on  
Public Policy in  
Maryland*

*Maryland Association of  
Area Agencies on Aging*

*Maryland Catholic  
Conference*

*Mental Health  
Association of Maryland*

*Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan*

*NAACAP- Maryland*

*National Association of  
Social Workers,  
Maryland Chapter*

*Presbytery of Baltimore*

*The Coordinating  
Center*

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## **Testimony in Support of SB 702 - Criminal Law - Exploitation of Vulnerable Adult or Elderly Individual - Undue Influence Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee February 20, 2020**

The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN) is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that supports policies that meet the housing and care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN supports SB 702 for recognizing the extent of abuse and exploitation of vulnerable adults in our communities. In fact, one in ten elders have experienced some form of abuse. Adult Protective Services agencies report that nationally, 20% of their elder abuse cases are for the types of financial exploitation addressed by this bill. 60% of such exploitation is committed by family members and another 17% by neighbors and friends. Elders often experience exploitation due to illness, impaired cognitive function, isolation, dependency or other related issues. This bill empowers the courts to determine the factors for vulnerability and whether the defendant should have known of the cause of vulnerability. It also requires that the defendant's authority over the victim be identified. It is terrible, but true, that vulnerable elders are coerced to surrender money or property by withholding care, medications, interactions with others. Sometimes the abuser uses affection, intimidation or coercion or hasty action to gain advantage over the vulnerable adult.

MSCAN thanks the Committee for considering this important bill and we respectfully request a favorable report. Thousands of vulnerable seniors will receive valuable protections by passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.