

MICHELE GUYTON  
Legislative District 42B  
Baltimore County

Ways and Means Committee

Education Subcommittee

Finance Resources Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 306  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3793 · 301-858-3793  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3793  
Michele.Guyton@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Support

**HB33 Criminal Law- Abuse or Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult-Causing Severe Emotional Distress**

Dear Chairman Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of HB33 Criminal Law- Abuse or Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult - Causing Severe Emotional Distress, as amended. This legislation adds severe emotional distress to the Maryland statute pertaining to abuse and neglect towards a vulnerable adult. It has been introduced as SB153 by Senator Charles Sydnor in the Senate.

Our most vulnerable citizens deserve to live a life of dignity, free from the well-documented negative effects on physical and mental health that are related to living with humiliation, threats, and harassment from those we trust to care for them. According to the American Psychological Association, of the millions of elderly adults who are abused each year, 95% of them also experience some form of emotional abuse. Emotional Abuse has been linked to isolation, early death, severe depression and the destruction of brain cells and neural connections. This is particularly damaging to older adults or those who are already neurologically diminished. Maryland law rightly protects children from emotional and mental injury. There are, however, no criminal penalties that protect vulnerable adults from this type of abuse. This is true despite the fact that most non-profit and state agencies serving the elderly and disabled recognize and describe emotional abuse against the elderly and vulnerable adults. These agencies, including the Maryland and Federal Adult Protective Services, the Maryland Courts, Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County, Baltimore City and the Maryland State 2-1-1 websites all encourage citizens to report abuse. Currently however, there is nothing that can be done to respond to even the most heinous of these reports. It is time for Maryland to join many other states in making the quality of life of our vulnerable adult citizens a true priority and I hope that the passage of HB33 will be a substantial step toward that goal. For that reason I ask for FAVORABLE report on HB33.

Sincerely,

Delegate Michele Guyton

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele Guyton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

District 42B Baltimore County