

Testimony for SB 940/HB 456 - FAV

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Good afternoon,

My name is Justine Quirk, I live in Rising Sun in Cecil County. Thank you for allowing me to present my testimony to you today.

My father died several years ago and my mother, after living alone for a year, decided that taking care of the home she and my father shared had become a bit too much for her to manage on her own. So she sold her house in CT and moved to Maryland to live with my husband and me.

She's 92 now, quite self sufficient, and is used to doing things her own way, for and by herself. So when her vision began to rapidly deteriorate due to macular degeneration, she started needing help with things.

Having to ask for help with anything for this fiercely independent woman, **such as identifying and sorting her prescription medications**, has been difficult and frustrating for her.

I suggested that certainly the pharmacy would be able to provide large print labels, at the very least, for their customers with visual impairments. When mom called our local pharmacy she was told that they did not provide large print labels, nor Braille packaging, nor any sort of accommodation for the blind. They offered no suggestions, no alternatives. They couldn't help her and that was that.

I went to the pharmacy myself to speak to someone in person, because surely this had to be a mistake, but it was not. "How do people with vision impairments know they're taking the right medication?" I asked. The response, with a shrug, was, "I guess they have someone read the labels for them." This was unacceptable to me, and it made me angry.

What about the people who live alone? What about those who have no one to help them? Dangerous mistakes can happen. And it's demoralizing, not just for the elderly like my mom, but for anyone experiencing blindness or low vision. I have learned that technology to provide audible reading of prescription labels already exists and could be made available to those who need it at minimal cost to pharmacies. I ask you to please support passage of this bill so that anyone with a visual impairment has the opportunity to independently and safely manage their prescription medications. Thank you so much for your time.