

SB202 Income Tax - Caregivers Tax Credit
FAVORABLE
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 17, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. I am Lisa Sun, a member of AARP and resident of Montgomery County. I like to give my support of SB202 Income Tax – Caregivers Tax Credit. I like to thank Senator Benson for sponsoring this important legislation.

AARP is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans aged 50 and older and their families. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders in achieving financial and health security and supporting safety net for seniors and low-income households in the state of Maryland is a priority.

SB202 allows caregivers who provide care or support in one or more daily activities to a family member that is over the age of 18 years to take a credit against their Maryland state income tax equal to 30% of the qualified expenses paid or incurred that exceed \$2,000. The goods and services that may be used to calculate this tax credit are explained in the bill and the tax credit cannot exceed \$5,000 in a year.

As a caretaker of a Super-Senior loved one and a member of a growing demographic group in our state, Asian American Pacific Islanders, I have experienced firsthand the compelling need for more integrative approach to care of our most vulnerable seniors, minority seniors. From translation to transportation, from cultural sensitivity training of our healthcare and senior care providers, to securing appropriate end-of-life hospice services, minority seniors face a full gamut of needs that we are just beginning to identify and address.

Although there is growing awareness that we need to address and provide culturally and linguistically appropriate healthcare and senior care services to our AAPI community, at present many family caretakers are left with ad hoc resources. Enacting SB202, Caretaker Tax Credit will impactfully begin a process of building a lifeline for many of these caretakers and their families, who are often managing the daily activities and needs of their senior loved ones, navigating the multi-faceted and often disconnected system of our healthcare and senior care industry all alone, while raising a family and working a job, all without a formal support system.

As a caretaker first of my mother, now of my father, I am grateful for the opportunity to have experienced firsthand the incredible challenges and satisfaction of a caretaker. But I am also mindful after listening to so many personal stories of caretakers on the frontline, struggling on almost an everyday basis, the trial and tribulation of caring for their parents in a multicultural society that at times is ambivalent about the role of our Asian heritage teaching of filial responsibility.

SB202 would give recognition and is designed specifically to compensate and provide some relief for those who give of their own time and money to care for a senior family member. Doing so will help to improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and their communities; but also make Maryland a state that honors filial responsibility, enriching our multicultural community, making it an attractive place for all seniors to live.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for the Committee to give SB202 a Favorable report.