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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 1176 - Home and Community Based Services Waiver – Eligibility

Health and Government Operations Committee

March 1, 2024

Support

Background: House Bill 1176 (HB1176) would make positive advances to the 2022 law, Home and Community Based Services Waiver- Participation and Applications by doing three things. First, it would establish a standard policy for the Department of Health (Department) to allow married couples to pool their assets so that one spouse can meet the waiver eligibility requirements. Second, it would adjust the Income Cap by changing the financial eligibility criteria for waivers to include categorically needy individuals with an income disregard up to 300% of the Supplemental Security Income monthly benefit amount. Lastly, it would require the Department to develop regulations for those individuals transitioning from Community First Choice to the Waiver.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies, including Jewish Community Services (JCS). JCS provides services, including in-home care to individuals with disabilities and older adults to help them age-in-place. However, JCS and similar nonprofits do not have the funding to be able to care for the vast majority of people in need of in-home care who cannot afford it. Making in-home care and the Waiver more accessible to Marylanders is a top priority. HB1176 seeks to make positive changes to help more lower income Marylanders age-in-place.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB1176.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of the Associated Jewish Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.