

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Will Smith, Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: TESTIMONY ON SB0270 - Adult Protective Services - Review Boards - Membership and Terms - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for consideration of Senate Bill 270 (SB 270).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, we empower Marylanders to reach their full potential by providing preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to workforce development and career opportunities. The Social Services Administration within DHS implements the Office of Adult Services programs which is affected by SB 270.

Adult Public Guardianship Review Boards in Maryland were established in 1984 to review public guardianship cases and ensure the well-being of adults under public guardianship. The boards consist of professionals and laypersons appointed by local governments. Board membership includes physicians, nurses, lawyers, disability professionals, and representatives from relevant agencies. Adult Public Guardianship Review Boards are volunteer, interdisciplinary teams that review all guardianship cases held by public agencies, including local departments of social services and the area agencies on aging. The boards meet regularly to evaluate the health and welfare of the individuals under guardianship and make recommendations to the court regarding continuation, modification, or termination of guardianship.

Despite the boards' important role, many Adult Public Guardianship Review Boards miss potential expertise due to the vacancies. Except for Worcester County, no jurisdiction currently has all board positions filled. Out of the 253 total member positions, there are currently 71 vacancies, resulting in a 28% vacancy rate statewide.

The proposed legislation alters the membership requirements of the Adult Public Guardianship Review Board and clarifies recruitment responsibilities. SB 270 proposes streamlining board membership from 11 to 8 board members and other changes that ensure relevant knowledge and expertise.

We believe the changes will help recruit and maintain the multidisciplinary membership needed to effectively protect the rights and welfare of the adults in guardianship. We respectfully request a favorable report from the Committee.



If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael López', written in a cursive style.

Rafael López
Secretary