



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

Date: January 17, 2025

Bill Number: SB 234

Bill Title: Housing and Community Development – Homeless Shelter Certification Program - Establishment

Committee: Senate Education, Energy and Environment

**MDOA Position: FAVORABLE**

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The Department of Aging (MDOA) thanks the Chair and Committee members for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 234, Housing and Community Development – Homeless Shelter Certification Program – Establishment.

MDOA applauds DHCD for bringing forward this important departmental legislation. Older adults in Maryland are steadily and increasingly experiencing greater financial strain and homelessness. According to recent DHCD data Marylanders over 65 are experiencing homelessness at an alarming rate, with most jurisdictions experiencing triple digit percent increases over the last 5 years. This negative trend will likely increase as Maryland's older adult population is growing - exponentially - especially in certain rural areas of the state. Older adults with regularity experience physical limitations and mobility issues, and special medical care needs. The baseline standards for homeless shelter certification that SB234 sets will account for these needs so that older adults experiencing homelessness anywhere in the state can access quality shelter that can accommodate them when they need it. SB234's standardization of shelter quality across Maryland is an important step forward to ensure that older adults' needs in the future can be met at any shelter they may need to enter.

Pursuant to a recent Executive Order, in January 2024, MDOA launched the Longevity-Ready Maryland Initiative - the goal is for all Marylanders to lead lives that are healthy, financially secure, socially connected, purposeful - with improved access to affordable housing, healthcare,



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and retirement needs. For Maryland to be longevity-ready, we need a high-functioning homeless shelter network overseen by a state agency, bringing a uniform baseline to access and services.

For these reasons, the Department of Aging respectfully urges a favorable report for SB 234. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Nunez, Legislative Director, at [andrea.nunez@maryland.gov](mailto:andrea.nunez@maryland.gov) or (443) 414-8183.

Sincerely,

Carmel Roques  
Secretary  
Maryland Department of Aging