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**SB 376 Health Care Facilities – Delegating Inspections Authority –Related Institutions and
Nursing Homes
House Health and Government Operations Committee
FAVORABLE
March 27, 2025**

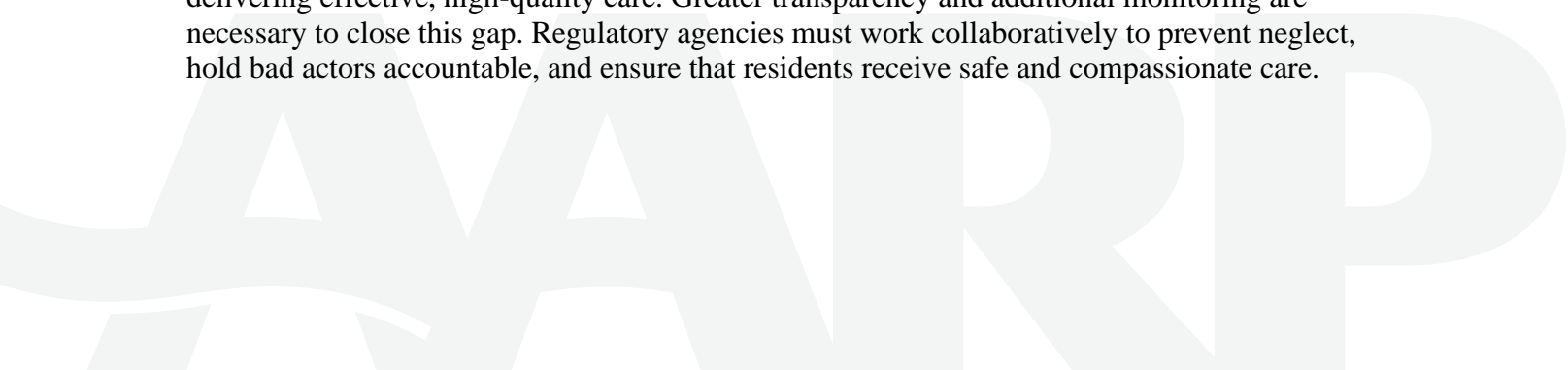
Good afternoon, Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. My name is Tammy Bresnahan, and I serve as the Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. We represent the interests of more than two million Marylanders aged 50 and over. On behalf of AARP Maryland, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 376, and we extend our sincere appreciation to Senator Kramer for sponsoring this important legislation.

SB 376 requires the Secretary of Health, upon request from a county to delegate to that county the authority to conduct site visits, full surveys, and complaint investigations of nursing homes. The bill also mandates the Maryland Department of Health to execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the requesting county within 90 days. Additionally, it calls for the Department and participating counties to share certain costs equally. Overall, this bill addresses the inspection of nursing homes and the delegation of regulatory authority to local governments.

Continuous and transparent oversight of nursing homes is essential, given the critical role these facilities play in Maryland's long-term care system. Each year, nursing homes in our state care for approximately 30,000 individuals—many of whom require 24-hour care, skilled nursing services, help with daily living activities, and rehabilitation therapies. Much of this care is publicly funded, underscoring the need for accountability and consistent quality assurance.

As of June 2023, Maryland had the second-highest backlog in the nation for overdue annual nursing home inspections. More than 80% of facilities had not been inspected in at least 17 months, and alarmingly, 104 nursing homes had gone more than four years without an inspection, according to data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). This delay in oversight poses serious risks to both resident safety and public confidence.

Without regular inspections and oversight, it is nearly impossible to ensure that facilities are delivering effective, high-quality care. Greater transparency and additional monitoring are necessary to close this gap. Regulatory agencies must work collaboratively to prevent neglect, hold bad actors accountable, and ensure that residents receive safe and compassionate care.



To that end, we believe that states must invest in a well-trained team of quality monitors who can:

- Conduct unannounced inspections at least annually;
- Respond to complaints promptly;
- Follow up on identified deficiencies;
- And receive specialized training focused on the needs of older adults and individuals with lifelong disabilities.

Inspections should go beyond clinical performance and include assessments of functional outcomes and overall quality of life. When deficiencies are discovered, increased monitoring should follow—especially in cases involving complex care needs.

AARP firmly believes that collaboration between state and local agencies, coupled with transparent oversight, is critical to improving the quality of care and the well-being of nursing home residents.

For these reasons, AARP Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 376. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at tbresnahan@aarp.org or 410-302-8451.