



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

Date: March 17, 2025

Bill Number: **SB212**

Bill Title: Department of Aging - Aging Services - Program Repeal and Consolidation

Committee: House Health and Government Operations

**MDOA Position: FAVORABLE ON BILL AS AMENDED**

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The Department of Aging (MDOA) thanks the Chair and Committee members for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of its departmental bill, Senate Bill (SB) 212 - Department of Aging - Aging Services - Program Repeal and Consolidation.

SB 212 will consolidate and modernize three longtime state-funded core programs serving older adults in their communities to better serve more older Marylanders. The bill repeals two smaller housing-related programs that were first enacted in the 1970s and 1980s, the Congregate Housing Services Program (CHSP) and Senior Assisted Living Subsidy Program (SALS). SB 212 will authorize the same functions under the existing statute for MDOA's Senior Care program. This will consolidate the three into a single, streamlined, program that it intends to rename SOAR (Supporting Older Adults with Resources) in a new, clear set of regulations post-passage that would lay out critical details around eligibility and program design. This program consolidation will eliminate differing eligibility and reporting requirements, standardize data collection and reporting, increase flexibility for area agencies on aging (AAAs) who deliver these services at the local level, and pave the way for *more* older Marylanders to benefit from useful services in their communities.

SB 212 also repeals the Interagency Committee on Aging Services, which has been completely inactive since 2014. MDOA's Longevity-Ready Maryland Initiative functions easily serve as a sufficient replacement for the cross-sector planning function the Interagency Committee on Aging Services was intended to have.



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MDOA intentionally proposed a delayed effective date of July 1, 2026, to allow for MDOA and key stakeholders to smoothly transition the 4,000 older adults currently served by these longtime programs.

After extensive engagement with key stakeholders involved with these programs, primarily the AAAs, MDOA support the AAAs amendments to SB 212 that confirm that MDOA and area agencies on aging and other key stakeholders will collaborate on critical program transition and new SOAR program design beginning in July 2025 through at least July 1, 2026. To ensure that current program participants are transitioned well with respect to the new program, AAAs will conduct person-centered assessments to determine individual transition plans that may include continued services or an alternative that ensure appropriate care is maintained.

These exact same amendments were adopted in January by the Health and Government Operations Committee's Health Occupations and Long-Term Care Subcommittee and full Health and Government Operations Committee to the cross-filed bill, HB 36. **SB 212 and HB 36 and are in the exact same posture.**

For these reasons, the Department of Aging respectfully urges a **favorable** report for SB 212 as amended. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Nunez, Legislative Director, at [andreah.nunez@maryland.gov](mailto:andreah.nunez@maryland.gov) or (443) 414-8183.

Sincerely,

Carmel Roques  
Secretary  
Maryland Department of Aging