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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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SB 347 – Adult Protective Services – Investigations and Disclosure of Information

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, colleagues on JPR. I am bringing this bill to you at the request of my county, Montgomery. In short, this bill would allow our local department of social services to request the assistance of federal law enforcement officers when working on investigations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

Local departments investigating victimization of vulnerable adults must follow Family Law 14-101 et seq. This section of the code states by when the investigation must begin, what it shall include, and with whom the local department may share information. It is that latter piece that SB 347 addresses. Currently, when conducting these Adult Protective Services investigations, there are two categories of entities that the local department may work with and share information:

1. The local State's Attorney or appropriate law enforcement agency;
2. The local office on aging or the Department of Aging, local geriatric evaluation service, or other agency providing services or care to the alleged vulnerable adult, or whose information or expertise may be of assistance in assessing risk or planning services.

Both of these groups of entities may assist in the investigation at the request of the local department. What our local department has found, however, is that there is no legal authority for them to work with *federal* law enforcement. For example, when our local department is investigating a case of mail fraud, they do not have the statutory authority to request the assistance of the U.S. Postal Inspector. It is this gap that SB 347 seeks to close.

I respectfully request your favorable report on SB 347.