

RYAN SPIEGEL
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Oversight Committee on Pensions

Transportation and the Environment



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 223
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3792
800-492-7122 Ext. 3792
Ryan.Spiegel@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**(HB1008) Fiduciary Institutions - Exploitation of Seniors and Vulnerable Adults -
Protections and Required Referral (Vulnerable Adult Banking Protection Act) -
2026**

Testimony of Delegate Ryan Spiegel – Favorable

Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

HB 1008, the Vulnerable Adult Banking Protection Act, is sponsored by Delegate Ryan Spiegel and Delegate Pam Queen. The bill strengthens protections for seniors and vulnerable adults who are increasingly targeted by financial exploitation.

Financial exploitation of seniors and vulnerable adults is one of the fastest growing forms of abuse in our country. According to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), approximately one in ten older adults experiences some form of financial abuse, yet only one in 44 cases is ever reported. Annual losses exceed \$2.9 billion nationwide, and nearly 90% of perpetrators are family members or other trusted individuals. At the same time, the rise of AI-driven fraud and increasingly sophisticated online scams has made these crimes even more difficult to detect and prevent.

In Maryland alone, more than 1,000 cases of financial exploitation involving seniors are reported each year, and the true number is likely far higher.

HB 1008 takes a proactive, prevention-focused approach. The bill authorizes fiduciary institutions to temporarily delay or deny suspicious disbursements when financial exploitation is suspected. It also allows these institutions to coordinate with law enforcement and appropriate agencies when concerns arise.

Financial institutions are often the first line of defense when unusual account activity occurs. Bank employees may notice sudden large withdrawals, transfers that are inconsistent with a customer's typical behavior, or transactions initiated under suspicious circumstances. However, without clear statutory authority, institutions may be limited in their ability to intervene.

HB 1008 provides that authority. It allows fiduciary institutions to pause transactions when credible concerns arise, creating a brief window to review the situation and notify appropriate authorities if exploitation is suspected. This small but critical step can

prevent life altering financial losses for seniors and vulnerable adults, without significant disruption of the normal flow of funds in financial transactions.

Importantly, the bill focuses on prevention. Once funds are transferred or withdrawn as part of a scam, they are often impossible to recover. By allowing institutions to act when red flags appear, HB 1008 helps stop exploitation before the damage is done.

This legislation also supports coordination between financial institutions, law enforcement, and protective services agencies, ensuring that suspected cases can be addressed quickly and appropriately while protecting the interests of vulnerable account holders.

Financial exploitation can devastate seniors who have spent a lifetime building their financial security. HB 1008 equips fiduciary institutions with clear tools to help protect those individuals when warning signs appear. Without the legal authority to act in this fashion, institutions are not able to take these important steps to protect account holders even when they already have the technological capability to do so.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1008.