

BILL NO: SB 530
TITLE: Village Multigenerational Third Places Act
SPONSOR: Senator Hettleman
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: SUPPORT
DATE: March 9, 2026

Senate Bill 530 – FAVORABLE
Senate Finance Committee
March 9, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Washington Area Villages Exchange (WAVE), we welcome the opportunity to submit testimony in strong SUPPORT of Senate Bill 530, the *Village Multigenerational Third Places Act*. Villages are vital contributors to the well-being of older adults and their communities. The Village movement has long recognized fostering meaningful social connection and community belonging as key to aging well and building healthy, vibrant, resilient communities for life. The proposed plan both adds capacity to Villages and builds on the *Longevity Ready Maryland* plan.

WAVE is a regional network connecting 80 Villages across Maryland, Virginia, Washington, DC, and West Virginia and is part of the national Village movement encompassing 280 Villages. Maryland alone is home to 43 Villages with more than 6,000 members and volunteers—a number that continues to grow. WAVE fosters collaboration to maximize the growth, impact, and sustainability of both individual Villages and the broader Village movement. WAVE provides education, mentorship, and advocacy, and convenes a major annual conference to strengthen the network.

Over WAVE's 13 years of supporting Villages throughout Maryland and the Metro DC area, we have witnessed how multigenerational third places are essential for helping older adults remain socially connected. Many Villages also depend on these spaces for day-to-day administrative needs. Villages are grassroots nonprofit organizations that operate and offer programming within their communities, and the reality is that affordable gathering and operating spaces in many communities are scarce.

Spaces within local churches, community centers, libraries, fraternal service organizations, coffee shops, and other shared spaces are key community resources for Villages and often, understandably, carry a cost. For most Villages, operations and programming, including games, book clubs, community suppers, estate planning, memoirs, exercise, memory and caregiver support, tech assistance, and cross-generational

events can only happen through the use of multigenerational third places and the funds to support their use. For emerging Villages and those serving financially burdened and historically marginalized communities, funding support for access to multigenerational third places is even more essential.

How Villages Support Quality of Aging

- **Aging Well in Community:** Sometimes referred to as “aging-in-place,” the focus is on enabling older adults to continue to live in their homes (whether house/condo/ apartment) and connected to their communities, reducing the need for assisted living.
- **Reduced Isolation & Loneliness:** Fosters social connections through events and volunteer opportunities, directly improving mental and physical health.
- **Support Services:** Provides trained and vetted volunteer help with daily tasks (e.g., transportation to appointments, light home maintenance, errands).
- **Cost-Effective & Accessible:** Offers a more affordable alternative to traditional senior care, with many villages offering sliding-scale fees to support diverse income levels.
- **Community & Purpose:** Strengthens local neighborhoods by connecting neighbors-helping-neighbors, fostering a sense of purpose for both members and volunteers.
- **Resource Coordination:** Connects members with trusted, vetted, local, professional service providers.

WAVE regards continuing investment in the growth and organizational development of Villages in Maryland as critical to the success of Maryland’s *Longevity Ready Maryland* plan. Senate Bill 530, recognizes that, by investing in Village access to multigenerational third places, Maryland can promote healthier aging, strengthen communities, and prevent more costly health and long-term care interventions for Marylanders.

For these reasons, we, on behalf of the Washington Area Villages Exchange (WAVE), respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 530. WAVE welcomes future opportunities to partner in creating a healthy future for Maryland’s older adults and vibrant, resilient communities for life.

PLEASE NOTE: WAVE President, Laila Riazi, will provide oral testimony in SUPPORT of SB 530 before the Maryland Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday, March 11, 2026.



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