



BILL NO.: SB 530
TITLE: Aging-in-Place Programs – Grants – Multigenerational Third Places (The Village Third Places Act)
SPONSOR: Senator Hettleman
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: **SUPPORT**
DATE: March 4, 2026

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 530 – Aging-in-Place – Grants – Multigenerational Third Places (The Village Third Places Act). This legislation responds to one of the most pressing and often overlooked needs of older adults aging in place: meaningful social connection and community belonging.

Maryland’s population is aging rapidly. Today, nearly 1 in 5 Marylanders is age 60 or older, and that number is projected to grow significantly over the next decade. Baltimore County mirrors and in some ways exceeds this trend. More than 230,000 Baltimore County residents are age 60 and older, representing approximately one quarter of the County’s population. As this population grows, so does the need for policies that support not only housing stability and services, but also social engagement, mental well-being, and intergenerational connection.

Research consistently shows that social isolation and loneliness are positively associated with increased risks of depression, cognitive decline, chronic disease, and premature mortality among older adults. The U.S. Surgeon General has identified social isolation as a public health crisis, with impacts comparable to smoking and obesity. For older adults, particularly those living alone, with limited income, or with mobility challenges access to welcoming, community-based gathering spaces can be life-changing.

Senate Bill 530 is both timely and innovative in recognizing the importance of multigenerational third places, community spaces outside the home or workplace that foster connection across ages. By explicitly authorizing grant funding to support social connection through events, gatherings, and access to these spaces, the bill strengthens Maryland’s existing aging-in-place framework and modernizes it to reflect how communities actually thrive.

In Baltimore County, Villages and other aging-in-place programs already demonstrate the power of social connection. Our local Villages and community-based organizations regularly partner with libraries, faith-based institutions, community centers, coffee shops, and other shared spaces to host educational programs, support groups, creative engagement activities, and intergenerational

KATHERINE A. KLAUSMEIER
County Executive



PAM KASEMEYER
Director of Government Affairs

BRAD KRONER
Deputy Director of Government Affairs

KAYENDA TWESIGYE
State Legislative Officer

events. These gatherings do not only reduce isolation for older adults, but also build stronger, more resilient neighborhoods.

However, many of these programs face significant financial barriers, particularly related to short- and long-term space rentals, administrative capacity, and coordination costs. SB 530 directly addresses these challenges by allowing grant funds to be used for operational and leasing costs associated with accessing multigenerational third places. This flexibility is critical for small and emerging nonprofits, especially those serving diverse, underserved, and historically marginalized communities.

We also strongly support the bill's emphasis on alignment with area plans on aging and consultation with area agencies on aging. This ensures that investments are data-driven, locally responsive, and coordinated with broader state and county aging strategies including Longevity Ready and Dementia-Friendly initiatives already underway across Maryland.

In closing, Senate Bill 530 recognizes that aging in place is not only about remaining at home, it is about remaining connected. By investing in multigenerational third places, Maryland can promote healthier aging, strengthen community ties, and prevent more costly health and long-term care interventions down the road.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 530 from the Senate Finance Committee. For more information, contact Kayenda Twesigye, State Legislative Officer of Government Affairs at ktwesigye@baltimorecountymd.gov.