



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

Date: February 3, 2026

Bill Number: HB 278

Bill Title: Human Services – Department of Aging and Commission on Aging - The Longevity Ready Maryland Act

Committee: House Health Committee

**MDOA Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

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**Madam Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this **favorable with amendments** testimony on behalf of the Maryland Department of Aging for **House Bill (HB) 278**. This bill represents a pivotal step in strengthening Maryland’s ability to prepare for population change and ensure that all Marylanders can age with dignity, purpose, and opportunity.

**The Demographic Imperative** - Maryland’s population is aging at a historic pace. Today, more than one in five Marylanders is age 60 or older, a share that is projected to grow to more than one in four by 2030. Older adults contribute billions to the local economy, fill critical roles in the workforce, and serve as leaders in our communities — yet many also face systemic barriers to healthy, secure, connected aging. This demographic shift presents both an opportunity and a challenge.

To prepare us, the **Longevity Ready Maryland Plan** (the “**LRM Plan**”) was developed under authority from an Executive Order in 2024 as a ten-year, multisector roadmap to embed longevity readiness across state policy, planning, and service delivery, as well as out of government systems. MDOA released its first LRM Plan in July 2025.

**What Longevity Ready Maryland Is and Why It Matters** - The LRM Plan is far more than an aging services plan. It is a **whole-of-government vision** that reorients how Maryland



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approaches aging across all sectors. It is grounded in evidence, feedback from stakeholders and designed to:

- ***Build a longevity ecosystem*** that connects state agencies, community organizations, healthcare, business, and academic partners to advance coordinated action.
- ***Promote economic opportunity*** through age-inclusive workforce participation and stronger support for caregivers.
- ***Prepare Marylanders to afford longevity*** with strategies for affordable housing, financial planning, and access to essential services.
- ***Optimize health, wellness, and mobility*** with investments in prevention, health equity, social connection, transportation, and community design.

The LRM Plan represents the state’s most comprehensive and strategic response to population aging — and yet as an **executive order-based initiative**, its durability and authority are limited. This approach takes us from a program-specific orientation of the last century, to one of forward-looking vision and advocacy, in partnership with others, on all issues that impact older Marylanders.

**Why Codifying LRM Into Law Is Necessary** - Codifying the LRM Plan’s principles and structures into statute the standing role of the Department of Aging as its leader.

**HB 278** is critical for several reasons, it:

- **Ensures Long-Term Stability and Accountability** - Executive orders can be altered or rescinded. Codification provides stable authority, ensuring that longevity readiness continues regardless of future administrations.
- **Strengthens Cross-Sector Coordination** - By embedding the LRM Plan into MDOA’s work permanently, Maryland will formalize a comprehensive, sustained approach that aligns agencies and stakeholders under shared goals. This enhances the effectiveness of



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policymakers, service providers, and community partners.

- **Enhances Measurement and Transparency** - Clear statutory directives will cement evaluation frameworks and reporting expectations.
- **Supports Greater Equity** - Law strengthens the framework needed to address disparities in access to care, housing, employment, and community participation across diverse populations statewide.
- **Make Maryland a National Leader in Preparing for Longer Lives** - Maryland would be the 5th state to codify this all-of-government approach, and proposes language that's specifically informed by Maryland stakeholders.

**Modernizing the Maryland Commission on Aging** - HB 278 proposes expansions to the Maryland Commission on Aging, a statutorily authorized state commission body that currently serves as a statewide advisory leadership group on senior issues and advocates for practical solutions. The Commission was established in 1959 and updated in 1971 and 2015.

Under existing law, the Commission's composition and duties were established to review statewide programs and make recommendations to the Secretary of Aging. HB 278 thoughtfully expands this role to reflect LRM's **multisector mission**, enabling the Commission to:

- better integrate longevity readiness across state policy,
- further leverage lived experience and subject-matter expertise,
- and align its work more directly with cross-sector strategy and accountability.

These enhancements will ensure that the Commission is diverse and representative, empowered, and more explicitly charged with advising the Department on Aging on guiding Maryland through the next several decades of demographic change.

There are no funding mandates within this legislation or the LRM Plan. MDOA is already doing this work with existing resources. MDOA reorganized its structure internally in recent years so



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that it can continue to lead this work: **HB 278 can be adopted with no cost to the state.** MDOA intends to strengthen inter-agency collaboration, pursue new sources of funding and continue efforts to obtain grant funding opportunities as they become available. The true goal is to align our existing resources as a state with these strategies, especially where we have resources for the same aim at multiple agencies.

**MDOA Amendments** - We urge your support for the sponsor amendments that are based on feedback from key stakeholders. The amendments:

- commit the Department to its current practice, maintaining a publicly accessible LRM Plan implementation progress tracker on our website;
- increase representation from area agencies on aging on the Commission on Aging;
- add a representative who is a veteran with interest in LRM to the Commission on Aging; and
- add clarifying language drawn from the recent federal final rule under the Older Americans Act.

HB 278 represents more than legislative housekeeping — it is a strategic investment in Maryland’s future. By codifying the **Longevity Ready Maryland** plan and strengthening the **Maryland Commission on Aging**, the General Assembly can ensure that our state leads with innovation, inclusivity, and economic resilience as our population continues to age.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Aging urges a **favorable with amendments report** on **HB 278**. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Nunez, Legislative Director, at [andrea.nunez@maryland.gov](mailto:andrea.nunez@maryland.gov) or (443) 414-8183.

Sincerely,

Carmel Roques  
Secretary, Maryland Department of Aging



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## **MDOA Amendments to HB 278 – Department of Aging and Commission on Aging (Longevity Ready MD Act)**

On page 3, after line 15, insert:

(4) coordinate, subject to existing law, assess and evaluate, and educate the public and professionals about all State and local programs and services, both public and private, that related and are important to the well-being of [seniors] **OLDER ADULTS** in the state **THAT ARE DESIGNED TO ASSIST OLDER INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY CAREGIVERS IN LEADING INDEPENDENT AND DIGNIFIED LIVES IN THEIR OWN HOMES AND COMMUNITIES.**

On page 6, after line 8, insert:

**(D) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL MAINTAIN A PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE RESOURCE ON ITS WEBSITE SHOWING IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS.**

On page 6, after line 21, insert:

**(1) [ONE] THREE DIRECTORS OF AN AREA AGENCY ON AGING, WHICH SHALL INCLUDE THE PRESIDENT OF THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING;**

On page 7, after line 2, insert:

**(5) ONE VETERAN WITH A DEMONSTRATED INTEREST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LONGEVITY READY MARYLAND PLAN.**