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February 3, 2026

RE: HB 0278 – Human Services – Department of Aging and Commission on Aging (The Longevity Ready Maryland Act) – SUPPORT

Dear Chairwoman Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Honorable Members of the House Health Committee,

I am Alita-Geri Carter, the owner of Qualequity Access, LLC., a consultancy grounded in data-driven transformation that advocates for quality, equity, access, and accessibility in healthcare and education. I am also the mother of two disabled children, a former unit-based director and assistant director of skilled nursing and long-term care facilities. I am writing to express my strong support for **House Bill 0278/SB 0113 (The Longevity Ready Maryland Act)**. As a resident of Columbia with a deep interest in healthcare quality improvement, I recognize that the demographic shifts currently facing Maryland require the proactive, multisector approach outlined in this legislation.

The Case for Longevity Readiness

Maryland is at a demographic crossroads. Recent data underscores the urgency of codifying the Longevity Ready Maryland (LRM) plan:

- **Rapid Demographic Shift:** As of 2020, Marylanders aged 60 and older comprised **22.62%** of our population. Projections indicate that by 2030, nearly one in every four adults in Maryland will be 60 or older and by 2040, nearly **26.57% of Marylanders** will be over the age of 60.
- **The 2030 Milestone:** By 2030, Marylanders over 60 are expected to outnumber those under.
- **Economic Impact of Caregiving:** Maryland relies on approximately **760,000 unpaid family caregivers**, whose contributions are valued at an estimated **\$12.5 billion** annually. HB 0278's focus on supporting this workforce is critical for our state's economic stability.
- **Regional Urgency:** In jurisdictions like Worcester and Talbot counties, the median age has already surpassed 50.

Why HB 0278 is Essential

This bill does more than just update terminology; it transforms the Department of Aging from a service provider into a leader of a statewide ecosystem.



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1. **Multisector Coordination:** By requiring the Secretary of Aging to lead the implementation of the LRM Plan, SB 0113/HB 0278 ensures that housing, transportation, and healthcare sectors work in concert rather than in silos.
2. **Infrastructure for Aging-in-Place:** With the majority of older Marylanders preferring to stay in their homes, the bill's support for the "No Wrong Door" access model and the expansion of wraparound community services is a fiscal and social necessity.
3. **Future-Proofing Policies:** The transition of the workforce where the 55–64 age group is rapidly aging out demands the age-inclusive workplace policies and "upskilling" pathways championed by this Act.

Conclusion

SB 0113/HB 0278 provides the statutory framework necessary to ensure that longevity is treated as an opportunity for growth rather than a crisis of care. By investing in infrastructure today, we protect the quality of life for the current aging population and future generations of Maryland residents.

I respectfully urge a **favorable report** on SB 0113/HB 0278.

Respectfully Submitted,

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