



**Testimony before the House Health Committee  
February 5, 2026**

**House Bill 278 - Human Services – Department of Aging and Commission on Aging  
(The Longevity Ready Maryland Act)**

**SUPPORT**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our support for HB 278 Human Services – Department of Aging and Commission on Aging (The Longevity Ready Maryland Act).

As social workers serving older adults, we understand the need for a visionary approach to meeting the needs of elders in Maryland. We support HB 278 because it will codify a comprehensive plan that includes a wide range of stakeholders, builds in accountability for progress, and adopts principles that align with social work values. This bill also empowers the Maryland Department of Aging and the Maryland Commission on Aging to take the lead in working across state agencies and sectors to meet the goals.

According to the Maryland Department of Planning, there were more than 11 million adults over 65 living in Maryland in 2023-24. By 2040, this group is expected to make up 21% of Maryland's population. While some elders are thriving, many face health decline, poverty, and isolation. According to the Maryland Food Bank, about 1 in 20 older Marylanders are food insecure. According to the MDOA, Maryland led the nation in drug- and alcohol-related deaths among seniors in 2022, and currently our state has the highest rate of Alzheimer's Disease in the country.

Features of Longevity-Ready Maryland that align with social work values include:

- Justice and Equity– the plan seeks to improve the quality of life for all elders, with a special focus on those in greatest social and economic need.
- Inclusiveness in Decision-Making – a wide range of stakeholders will participate in the process.
- Cross-sector coordination to address the needs of the “whole person” –the plan breaks down silos to ensure equal access to resources and opportunities for older adults throughout the state.

For these reasons, we ask that you give a favorable report to HB 278.

Respectfully,

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