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MAYOR

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HB0278

February 5, 2026

TO: Members of the Health Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 278 – Human Services - Department of Aging and Commission on Aging (The Longevity Ready Maryland Act)

POSITION: Favorable

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 278.

This departmental bill from the Maryland Department of Aging requires the Secretary of Aging to lead implementation of the “Longevity Ready Maryland (LRM) Plan” – a multisector plan that, per the bill, “transforms programs, services, policies, institutions, and systems to address the growing population of older adults and incorporates streamlined, innovative approaches to aging services.” Among other things, the bill also requires the Secretary to maintain a system that provides information, referrals, and counseling for older adults and their caregivers, and to report certain information pertaining to the Plan to the General Assembly.

This bill will codify into law the responsibility of the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging to administer the programs and activities that the federal government delegates to states under the Older Americans Act of 1965 that are not otherwise committed by law to another unit of State government and to align those activities with the LRM framework. That framework includes four goals: building a longevity ecosystem, promoting economic opportunity, preparing state residents to afford longevity and optimizing health, wellness, and mobility.

This bill defines and broadens the authority of the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging to make recommendations, provide consultation and technical assistance to a significantly broader array of systems, organizations, entities and individuals, thereby maximizing the impact of LRM and the operations of Maryland's network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). This new authority better positions the Maryland Department of Aging to navigate the anticipated service and system gaps through the implementation of the initial LRM Plan, annual updates, four and year revisions and reconfiguring and staffing the Commission on Aging. Additionally, removing the requirement that seven members of the commission be at least 55 years old reflects a practicable approach that allows the commission membership to reflect the life course and allow invested and purpose driven advocates and leaders at various stages of life to participate in this body.

Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) serves as the City's AAA and works in close collaboration with the Maryland Department of Aging. BCHD and the BCA strongly support this bill, as it will strengthen the Maryland Department of Aging's ability to coordinate across sectors and counties to build out a 21st century model to achieve the best outcomes for older adults. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 278.