



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

January 21, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: TESTIMONY ON Senate Bill 182 - Adult Protective Services - Modifications - FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests a favorable position on our departmental bill, Senate Bill (SB) 182.

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. The DHS Social Services Administration (SSA) implements the Adult Protective Services (APS) program.

APS received 22,802 reports from the community during state fiscal year 2025, regarding the safety and well-being of adults in Maryland. This represents a 217% increase from 2018, in which APS received 7,185 reports. APS workers are first responders who quickly identify whether our loved ones, as well as those who have no family or social support, have the services they need to live safely, in settings of their choice. We respond to family homes in the community, as well as long-term care settings, such as assisted living and nursing facilities. Until recently, there was no federal oversight or funding for states' APS programs.

In May 2024, the federal government implemented a [rule](#) (45 CFR Part 1324) creating minimum standards for state APS programs. This rule's compliance deadline is May 8, 2028. The rule includes mandatory response times and standard definitions, most of which are already in place in Maryland. In order to meet the May 2028 compliance

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requirements, several state statutory APS definitions must be aligned with the new federal rule. Without these critical updates, Maryland APS will be unable to fully meet federal requirements, risking program inefficiencies, service inconsistencies, and potentially losing federal support or funding.

SB 182 is necessary to bring Maryland law into alignment with the federal rule by clarifying key definitions such as “abuse,” and “exploitation.” These changes will ensure that APS professionals can consistently identify and respond to cases of maltreatment, collect accurate data, and apply appropriate interventions across jurisdictions. The bill also addresses procedural gaps that currently hinder timely investigations and coordinated responses, especially in complex cases involving financial exploitation, self-neglect, and long-term care settings. By modernizing the statutory language and reinforcing the scope and authority of APS, the legislation aims to strengthen protections for vulnerable adults and ensure equitable access to services statewide.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer favorable testimony to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at justin.hayes1@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael Lopez', written in a cursive style.

Rafael López
Secretary