

MDOA - Written FAV SB182 - Adult Protective Servic

Uploaded by: Carmel Roques

Position: FAV



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

Date: January 21, 2026

Bill Number: **SB182**

Bill Title: Adult Protective Services - Modifications

Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings

MDOA Position: FAVORABLE

The Department of Aging (MDOA) thanks the Chair and Committee members for the opportunity to submit this favorable testimony for Senate Bill (SB) 182 - Adult Protective Services - Modifications.

The Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) serves as Maryland's State Unit on Aging, administering federal and state funding for core programs, overseeing the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) network at the local level that provides supportive services to older adults, and planning for Maryland's growing older adult population. MDOA and AAAs work to prevent all forms of abuse and neglect of older adults through: the work of the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman, public elder abuse awareness efforts, funding legal aid service organizations for older adults who are victims of elder abuse and exploitation, and serving as the public guardians for older adults over 65 where no one else suitable is available. MDOA's Maryland Access Point service is a wide-ranging single point of entry for services and options counseling for older adults, caregivers and other community members. As mandated reporters, MAP staff within AAAs regularly make reports of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of older adults to local Adult Protective Services investigators based on information shared during MAP interactions with older adults.



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

MDOA commends the Maryland Department of Human Services for bringing forward SB 182. This bill represents an important step towards full compliance with the first ever new federal rule governing adult protective services from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Administration for Community Living. It also provides critical updates to Maryland's existing statutory language that will strengthen adult protective services investigations going forward.

This bill directly aligns with MDOA's Longevity-Ready Maryland Plan¹, which will work to make Maryland more prepared for our increasingly longer lives over the next 10 years.

For these reasons, the Department of Aging respectfully urges a **favorable** report for SB 140. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Nunez, Legislative Director, at andrea.nunez@maryland.gov or (443) 414-8183.

Sincerely,

Carmel Roques
Secretary
Maryland Department of Aging

¹ MD Department of Aging website, "Longevity Ready Maryland," *available at*: <https://lrm.maryland.gov/>

SB0182_DHS_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Hayes

Position: FAV



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

SB0182-JPR-SUPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB0182

January 21, 2026

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 182 - Adult Protective Services - Modifications
POSITION: Support

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill 182.

This departmental bill alters provisions relating to the reporting and investigation of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults such that the local Department of Social Services is required to complete an investigation and make a certain defined finding regarding allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation within 60 days.

This bill will bring Maryland into compliance with a 2024 federal ruling regarding Adult Protective Services (APS) and strengthen the state's ability to hold those who abuse, neglect, and exploit vulnerable adults accountable. Abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults is a serious and widespread issue in Baltimore City – both for Baltimore City residents and older adults originally from other counties.

Because of the number of hospitals and assisted living facilities in the city, many older adults from other counties are hospitalized in the City of Baltimore and subsequently discharged to assisted living facilities (ALFs) here. The Baltimore City Health Department's Division of Aging and Community Support serves as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the city. The agency also houses the Long-term Care Ombudsman program, which advocates for residents of nursing homes and licensed ALFs. Our Long-term Care Ombudsman frequently receives complaints of exploitation. Many assisted living providers require the residents to make them the representative payee, thereby removing their control of funding and subjecting these vulnerable adults to the discretion of the assisted living providers regarding their care, medication, food, and suitable living conditions. This becomes an even greater issue when the resident moves to another facility, in which cases the owner of their former residence often continues to take their money. Alternatively, this can prevent residents from moving to a new facility even if they want to, because they do not have control over their own finances.

By defining the findings that the local departments must make in their investigations, this bill will help strengthen the investigation and reporting of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older adults. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 182.

Testimony in support of SB0182 - Adult Protective

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0182_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

01/21/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

TESTIMONY ON SB#0182 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Adult Protective Services – Modifications

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0182, **Adult Protective Services - Modifications**

Maryland law has specific statues and laws regarding Abuse and Neglect of Elderly and Vulnerable Adults. ¹ This bill strengthens those laws by altering provisions relating to the reporting and investigation of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults; and requiring a local department of aging to complete an investigation and make an indicated, not indicated, or undetermined finding within 60 days.

It will accomplish this by adding to current defined physical injury, PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM, OR SEXUAL ABUSE as types of abuse. It will further support stopping the abuse by redefining the abuser from "any person" as AN INDIVIDUAL IN A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST WITH THE VULNERABLE ADULT.

Maryland created a TASK FORCE ON PREVENTING AND COUNTERING ELDER ABUSE ² who issued a final report on 12/31/2024. This bill will assist in implementing some of the conclusions found in that task force report and make protections stronger in preventing elder abuse in Maryland

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0182.

¹ <https://www.peoples-law.org/abuse-and-neglect-elderly-persons>

²² [https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDoA/SB797Ch706HB1191Ch707\(2023\)_2024\(12\).pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDoA/SB797Ch706HB1191Ch707(2023)_2024(12).pdf)

SB 182 - Adult Protective Services - AARP MD.pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Westrick

Position: FAV



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Senate Bill 182 – Adult Protective Services - Modifications
Judicial Proceedings Committee
January 21, 2026
Support

Chairman Smith, and distinguished members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Sara Westrick, Advocacy Director for AARP Maryland. AARP Maryland supports Senate Bill 182, which seeks to support Adult Protective Services within our state.

As a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to advocating for individuals age 50 and older, AARP is committed to ensuring that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. SB 182 represents a critical improvement in ensuring that Maryland's Adult Protective Services system is equipped to safeguard these individuals.

AARP Maryland's Position

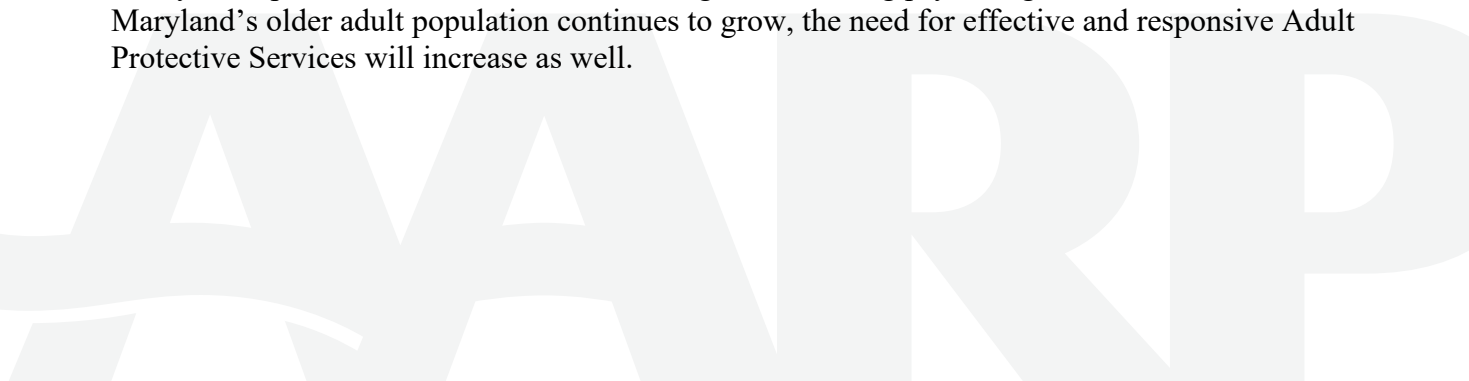
We support SB 182 because it includes the addition of "psychological harm" as a form of abuse, acknowledging the severe impact of emotional distress on vulnerable adults, ensuring that non-physical forms of abuse are recognized and addressed.

In addition, by defining "relationship of trust," the bill emphasizes the responsibility of caregivers, relatives, and others in close relationships to protect vulnerable adults, holding them accountable for any abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This also helps clarify the role of Adult Protective Services within the first-responder continuum; the bill encourages cooperation among local departments, law enforcement, aging services, and other agencies, fostering a multidisciplinary approach to investigations and care planning.

Additionally, the bill helps ensure that Maryland's Adult Protective Services remains in compliance with federal regulations, enhancing its credibility and effectiveness.

Why This Legislation Matters

Elder abuse is a serious and growing problem. According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, one in ten older adults experiences some form of abuse, yet it remains underreported. Many victims are isolated and unable to advocate for themselves. SB 182 further strengthens the state's ability to respond to all forms of abuse and neglect, including psychological harm. As Maryland's older adult population continues to grow, the need for effective and responsive Adult Protective Services will increase as well.



Conclusion

AARP Maryland believes that SB 182 is a critical step toward enhancing the safety and security of Maryland's most vulnerable residents. We urge the committee to support this important legislation and work to ensure that Adult Protective Services has the tools and resources it needs to protect older adults from harm.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick at swestrick@aarp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.

Testimony SB182 APS Modification.pdf

Uploaded by: Valerie Borek

Position: UNF

Valerie Ferrell, Cecil County

I'm writing in opposition to SB182/HB282, "Adult Protective Services – Modifications."

I voluntarily cared for my sister in my home for five and a half years. She has a brain injury and psychosis. Our parents are deceased and there are no other siblings, and she can't manage on her own. Over the years her behavior turned violent and escalated while I struggled to find her psychological help that is dangerously lacking in Maryland. She was on a wait list for residential psych for over a year. Her anger eventually exploded at me in June and she came at me with a kitchen knife. After nine months in the detention center, she was finally taken in at a residential psych program, but I'm told it's voluntary, and she could leave at any time. She would be homeless.

Under the proposed language, could I be investigated for "neglect" if she walked out and had no home? The proposed definition of a "trusted relationship" includes relatives and people who have "assumed" care. If I assumed care in the past, this language appears to hold me responsible indefinitely. I didn't have a legal obligation to care for her, but it seems like under this new language I would. Typically a person has to petition the court for a guardianship to be legally responsible for the wellbeing of another, but this proposed language seems to make a legal relationship where none should exist.

My sister makes false reports against me and my husband. Will we have to undergo more if this bill is amended even though she's no longer in my home or under my care? There are many mandated reporters, and no penalty for false, careless or retaliatory accusations. I was investigated by APS after she was arrested, and under the proposed changes it seems I could be investigated again simply because in the past I volunteered to care for her.

Our system is already biased toward maximized reporting, and the proposed changes would create even more reports, which will burden county resources and expand the possibility of needless and stressful investigations.

The proposed language would create an unfunded mandate on counties to handle more reports and presumably train investigators on parsing out "psychological harm." What happens when a vulnerable adult is suffering from chronic mental illness? How will an investigator know how to discern one psychological symptom from another, or the onset of something perceived as separate?

I urge the committee to reject these amendments.