



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 745

Office of the Attorney General-Senior and Vulnerable Adult Asset Recovery Unit

Judiciary  
Appropriations

March 5, 2020

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Margo Quinlan, Co-Chairs

### Member Agencies:

Advocates for Children and Youth  
Baltimore Jewish Council  
Behavioral Health System Baltimore  
CASH Campaign of Maryland  
Catholic Charities  
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland  
Family League of Baltimore  
Fuel Fund of Maryland  
Health Care for the Homeless  
Homeless Persons Representation Project  
Job Opportunities Task Force  
League of Women Voters of Maryland  
Loyola University Maryland  
Maryland Catholic Conference  
Maryland Center on Economic Policy  
Maryland Community Action Partnership  
Maryland Family Network  
Maryland Hunger Solutions  
Paul's Place  
Public Justice Center  
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore  
Welfare Advocates

### Marylanders Against Poverty

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**Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) supports the creation and funding of a unit within Maryland's Office of the Attorney General to protect vulnerable adults from financial abuse.**

**Even financially stable older adults are at risk of experiencing poverty due to rampant financial abuse.** Low social supports, living in crowded communities, dementia, trauma, and physical impairments are just some factors which make older adults particularly vulnerable to abuse. According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, financial abuse of elders impacts the financial, physical and emotional health of seniors. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that the field of elder abuse lags at least two decades behind the fields of child abuse and domestic violence, and calls on policymakers to enact laws to adequately address the issues. Maryland has the opportunity to become a leader in addressing financial abuse of older adults.

**House Bill 745 provides greater recourse for older adults who fall victim to financial abuse.** The bill would create a dedicated unit within the office of the Attorney General, specifically dedicated to elder financial abuse. The bill also requires a \$250,000 annual appropriation to support the unit.

This bill provides Maryland the opportunity to protect some of its most vulnerable residents from financial abuse, and serves as a deterrent against future acts. **MAP appreciates your consideration, and urges a favorable report on House Bill 745.**

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*Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.*