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**To:** Members of The House Judiciary Committee

**From:** Elena Sallitto, Member, MSBA Vulnerable Adult Exploitation Task Force *and*  
MSBA Elder Law & Disability Rights Section

**Date:** March 5, 2020

**Subject:** **HB745** – Office of the Attorney General - Senior and Vulnerable Adult Asset Recovery Unit

**Position:** **Support**

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The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) Elder Law and Disability Rights Section (ELDR) and the MSBA Vulnerable Adult Exploitation Task Force support House Bill 745 that expands the authority and staffing of the Senior and Vulnerable Adult Asset Recovery Unity housed within the Office of the Attorney General.

Attorneys who work with vulnerable adults are witnessing a steady increase in the numbers of people victimized by abuse and exploitation. Most of the perpetrators are trusted family members and caregivers upon whom the victims may be dependent for their most basic needs. The injuries suffered are often catastrophic affecting the victim’s health, safety and welfare. Due to the victims’ advanced age or compromised health, they are unable to recover from the violation. Often, stripped of their life savings, victims are forced to rely on government programs for their needs, at huge, and unnecessary taxpayer expense. A 2009 study by the MetLife Mature Market Institute found that the financial loss from elder financial abuse is approximately \$2.6 billion. It further concludes “[i]t is estimated to cost Americans tens of billions of dollars annually in health care, social services, investigative and legal costs, and lost income and assets. Elder financial abuse is a problem in every community and among all social strata. It is underrecognized, underreported, and underprosecuted.”

The Vulnerable Adult Exploitation Task Force (“Task Force”) was organized by the Section Councils of both the Estates & Trusts Section and the ELDR Section of the Maryland State Bar Association to address the growing concerns about the exploitation of vulnerable adults. As part of its initial purpose, the Task Force seeks to provide input and insight supportive of legislation to address the abuse of vulnerable adults. In addition, the Task Force is seeking to work with legislators to create thoughtful and comprehensive civil and criminal legislation to attack this problem head on, providing protections for vulnerable adults and provide both criminal prosecutors and civil attorneys with the ability to enforce those protections. HB745 is a step forward in that direction.



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Both the MSBA Joint Vulnerable Adult Task Force and the ELDR Section **supports House Bill # 745**. We applaud its sponsors and co-sponsors and urge a favorable report.

For any questions or to learn more about the task force, we invite you to contact

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