



COMMISSION ON AGING

February 18, 2021

The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chair
House Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Pendergrass:

I am writing on behalf of the Montgomery Commission on Aging to join with the Maryland Association of Area Agencies on Aging in support of HB 903, Task Force to Study the Maryland Public Guardianship Program.

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging (CoA) is authorized by the Older Americans Act, P.L. 116-131, and was established by Montgomery County in 1974 to advise County government on the needs, interests and issues of Older Adult residents, and to advocate on their behalf at the local, state and national levels.

Public Guardianship provides substitute decision-making for adults whom a court has determined lack the capacity to make their own decisions about housing, safety, or medical care, and who have no appropriate family member or loved one to serve in this role. These cases are ongoing and time-consuming. In Montgomery County, the public guardianship unit also provides services to continuing Adult Protective Services clients who are not under guardianship, conducts guardianship assessments after receiving referrals from hospitals, and provides services to clients of the Social Services to Adults program.

The bill requires the task force to compare practices of local Area Agencies on Aging related to the Public Guardianship program, analyze and compare other states' public guardianship programs, examine best practices related to public guardianship programs, and make recommendations to improve Maryland's public guardianship program. Public guardianship units throughout Maryland will benefit from this research.

As the population of older adults grows, the number of people who will need these types of services will grow. Maryland needs good public policy based on sound reasoning. The task force created by HB 903 will create the foundation on which the State can enact good public policy regarding the public guardianship program. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Barbara Selter sb

Barbara Selter, Chair
Montgomery Commission on Aging

CC: Delegate Bridges
Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

Department of Health and Human Services

401 Hungerford Drive, 4th Floor, Rockville, Maryland, 20850 240-777-1120, FAX 240-777-1436
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs