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Judiciary Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 04, 2021

Honorable Chairman, Delegate Luke Clippinger

Vice Chairman, Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary

Members of the House Judiciary Committee

**Re:** HB-1281 - Adult Protective Services - Vulnerable Adults Registry - Investigations and Records of Abuse and Neglect and Workgroup Study

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I am pleased to introduce House Bill 1281. The purpose of this bill is to ensure vulnerable adults are being protected by the same agency we've put in place. This bill authorizes Social Services to create and keep a specific condensed service for vulnerable adults who may be abused and neglected in their environment. Social Services would be responsible for inputting individuals into the database that have abused or neglected an adult in certain circumstances. The bill would also put in place a workgroup to study best practices for vulnerable adults registry in Maryland. Price Benowitz J.D. stated that in Maryland alone as much as 60% of all elder abuse that occurs is actually verbal or emotional which is also a type of abuse most forget about. Neglect makes up about 15%, sexual and financial abuse accounts for about 8% of all abuse complaints coming from nursing homes. Sexual abuse claims that come from nursing home residents can make up about 20% of the abuse claims which also involve resident-on-resident assault or abuse. Requiring local offices or agencies to keep track would help stop the growing number, that is not 100% accurate decrease. This will create an initiative that will have agencies exert more effort into stopping elderly abuse and into creating safer environments to help our adult community.

Elder abuse or adults being abused is a public health issue across the nation. The World Health Organization states that 15.7% of people over the age of 60 years old are abused in some way and also indicated that this was an underestimation. The World Health Organization also stated that only 1 in 24 cases are reported as well. It would also help with the scarce information we have about abused adults and their abusers. There is not enough information being imputed about abuse reported by adults and their proxies. A system that this bill purposes can help input more data along with finding new solutions. Creating a system would ensure that the officials certified to work as agents for Social Services are inputting information to help put an end to the abuse of adults and bringing some sort of end to the abuse. The more data being inputted will allow workgroups to have more information to work with and have better practices in place. This would include having more reliable employees in adult facilities, more programs on teaching people how to tend to the elderly, signs to pick up in regards to abuse and neglect. I ask the committee to not forget about our elderly community or members and urge a favorable report on House Bill 1281.

Sincerely,

*Wanika B. Fisher*

Wanika B. Fisher Esq.

Maryland State Delegate – District 47B