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SB 357 Adult Protective Services Best Practices for a Vulnerable Adult Registry in Maryland
FAVORABLE
House Judiciary Committee
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Good Afternoon Chair Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the state, encompassing almost 900,000 members. AARP MD overwhelmingly supports **SB 357 Adult Protective Services - Vulnerable Adults Registry - Investigations and Records of Abuse and Neglect and Workgroup Study** as amended and now known as **SB 357 Adult Protective Services Best Practices for a Vulnerable Adult Registry in Maryland**. We thank Senator Benson for sponsoring this important legislation.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

SB 357 authorizes the Social Services Administration within the Department of Human Services (Department) to establish a workgroup to study best practices for a Vulnerable Adult Registry. The study as proposed is a system for maintaining the identity of individuals who are found only as a result of an Adult Protective Services investigation and that have an indicated finding of abuse, neglect or have exploited a vulnerable adult.

Abusing adults, adults in a long-term care, a family member, a friend in a health facility setting that care for an adult especially a vulnerable adult affects hundreds of thousands of us every day. Adult protective services provide some safeguards but are called into investigate after the fact. We know abuse occurs without regard to race, income, education, place of residence, or living arrangements. It is such a sickening feeling when you have to leave your mother, father, grandparent or other adult that for no fault of their own are no longer able to care for themselves and is in need of care in a health facility, day care setting or have someone come into their home to provide care. We hope, when we leave our vulnerable family member in the care of others that staff in those facilities are caring and nurturing, but there are a small few who are not and for those reasons, we need to keep track of those people.

AARP believes SB 357 is a step in the right direction to protect vulnerable adults in a health care facility. Oversight measures in these facilities must ensure that direct service workers are appropriately screened for criminal backgrounds, including a fingerprint check and review of federal and state protective service and abuse registries.

Over half the states in the United States (26) now have abuser registries for perpetrators of elder and vulnerable adult abuse.¹ It is time for Maryland to join the ranks. For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committee issue a FAVORABLE report on SB 357. For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@arp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

¹ <https://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/adult-protective-services-abuse-registry-national-report/>