



Cancer Support Foundation, Inc.  
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Finance

SB905

Support

March 1, 2022

Cindy Carter  
Cancer Support Foundation

Good afternoon, madam chair Kelly and committee. I am Cindy Carter Co-Founder of the Critical Medical Needs Program, Founder of the Power to the People Program and Executive Director of Cancer Support Foundation. I am here today in favor of SB905 Silver Energy Savers Program. This bill provides a program to help our seniors age safely in place keeping their lights and heat on.

Seniors aging in place in Maryland is a big issue that is growing all of the time. Keeping the lights and heat on for our seniors is basic is being able to age safely in their homes.

Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP) is not a customer friendly agency. The pandemic really highlighted the issues with directing people to do the application for grants for lights and heat to be done online. Many of our seniors are unable to work on a computer or understand the system. Many are unable to go to local offices to get assistance, and many are unable to get assistance over the phone.

The application deals with six different grants and is very confusing leading to questions as to what it means as well as what documents are needed to be gathered and go in with the application. Customer service is needed for seniors especially as their health changes creating both physical and mental challenges. Many do not have family support to help get through this process.



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Of those who are eligible for these OHEP grants, 41% are seniors 60 yrs. old and above. Our senior population is growing and without lights and heat grants for many aging in place will be a bigger challenge.

SB905 sets up a Silver Energy Savers Program for those 60yrs and above to get the customer service that is needed to get them through this process. We are working with United Way 211 to facilitate this program from their four locations. You will hear from them. This bill would provide:

- Four locations across the state, Central MD, Southern MD, Eastern Shore, Western MD
- Call centers to help clients through the application understanding and completing
- Call centers to work with client to know what documents need to be gathered
- Communication between the Call Centers and the local OHEP offices to better facilitate the processing of the application and communication back to the client
- Home visits by the local OHEP offices when needed to pick up documents
- Call centers have the ability to get telephone signatures on the applications as major time saving factor. This exists now with Critical medical need Program applicants.
- Call centers to work with clients to from beginning to end and be the front-line contact for the client

Silver Energy Savers Program is a game changer program for our seniors. It is a major step in the right direction to keep them aging safely in place. Getting our seniors into this program helps to address once of the major areas that need to be addressed for our seniors to be safe. I am asking for a favorable report on SB905.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cindy Carter".

Cindy Carter  
Co-Founder Critical Medical Needs Program  
Executive Director Cancer Support Foundation, Inc.