

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 740 PARKINSON'S DISEASE REGISTRY

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Thank you, Chair Kelley and members of the Senate Finance Committee, for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 740 that will create a Parkinson's Disease Registry in Maryland. I thank Senators Elfreth, Beidle, Feldman, and Klausmeier for sponsoring and cosponsoring of this bill, including those of you on this committee.

I am a retired law enforcement officer, and I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2009. I experienced a "freezing" episode which is a sudden paralysis, that caused me to fall and suffer a closed head injury and shattered my spine. Through intensive rehabilitation I had to learn to take care of myself. I have used my challenges and experiences to inspire and support others with Parkinson's, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, and other movement disorders.

I tell you this story because Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disease which there is no cure but can be managed. A registry will be beneficial in estimating future health care costs and medications. On the Average, according to medical statistics, people with Parkinson's disease spend an average of four days longer than usual during a hospital stay.

A Parkinson's disease registry will be helpful in estimating cases of different types of Dementia including but not limited to Alzheimer's, multiple system atrophy (MSA), muscular, muscular/skeletal, brain and mental health issues.

Passage of this bill also makes economic sense as it will be a helpful tool in projecting future health care costs as Parkinson's attacks the entire body, due to the life span or the lack of the body's ability to produce dopamine.

A registry for Maryland would help us better understand the depth and scope of the disease. Thank you for allowing me to testify, I ask you for a favorable report on SB 740. If you would like to follow up with me, I can be reached at larryzarzecki@yahoo.com or by calling me at 410-916-1638.