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**SB 531 Maryland Health Care Commission – Assisted Living Programs – Study
House Health and Government Operations Committee
FAVORABLE
March 24, 2022**

Good afternoon Chair Pendergrass and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. As you know, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the country. AARP Maryland and its more than 850,000 members support SB 531. We thank Senator Beidle and Delegate Belcastro for sponsoring this bill in the Senate and the House to protect Maryland's most vulnerable citizens. We also thank them for being a champion for long term care quality.

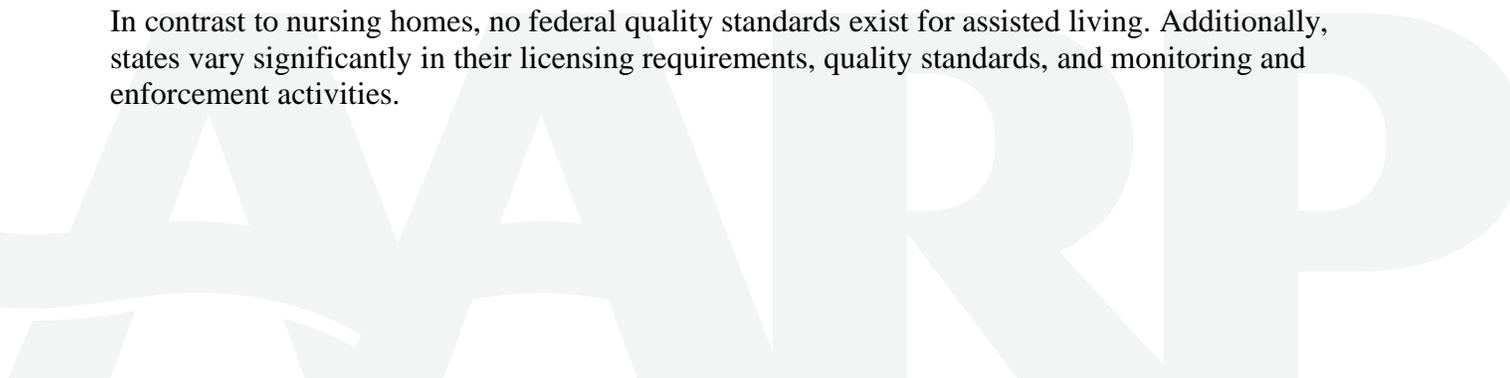
AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

SB 531 requires the Maryland Health Care Commission, in consultation with the Office of Health Care Quality, the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, the Medicaid Administration, the Governor's Workforce Development Board, and interested stakeholders, to conduct a study regarding the quality of care by assisted living programs with nine or fewer beds.

Assisted living facilities are designed for older people who are no longer able to manage living independently and need help with daily activities such as bathing or dressing, but don't require the round-the-clock health care that a nursing home would provide. Assisted living is there to offer that assistance, while maximizing their independence.

What we are all are familiar with is that assisted living facilities usually provide residents with their own apartments or rooms, as well as some common areas. They may offer around-the-clock supervision and a range of services, including meals, housekeeping and laundry, as well as assistance with personal care and help with medications. What we have in Maryland is a rather large percentage of smaller assisted living facilities that provide level three care like what is provided in a nursing home.

In contrast to nursing homes, no federal quality standards exist for assisted living. Additionally, states vary significantly in their licensing requirements, quality standards, and monitoring and enforcement activities.



In October 2000, the Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes and Assisted-Living Facilities originated when the General Assembly established the Oversight Committee on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes. The Committee adopted its present name on October 1, 2005 adding Assisted Living to the Oversight Committee. As a group who is represented on the Committee, it has been brought to the attention of the committee, problems in the smaller assisted living facilities, such as inadequately trained staff, too few staff, medication errors, and the admission and retention of individuals who need more care.

AARP Maryland believes that state governments should conduct regular, thorough, and consistent oversight of long-term care including assisted living. Oversight should include evaluation of consumer outcomes and the quality of care.

AARP Maryland also believes that States should also ensure quality of care and quality of life for all consumers. The rights of the consumer should be protected in all long-term care settings including assisted living.

For these reasons, AARP Maryland respectfully requests the Senate Finance Committee issue a favorable report for SB 531. For questions or further follow up, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.