

Testimony of the Alzheimer's Association Greater Maryland and National Capital Area Chapters
HB 529 – Estates and Trusts - Supported Decision Making
Position: Favorable

Chair Pendergrass and Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk,

My name is Eric Colchamiro, and I am Director of Government Affairs for the Alzheimer's Association in Maryland. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 529, which authorizes the use of supported decision making to assist an adult through the provision of certain support for the adult in making, communicating, or effectuating certain decisions and preventing the need for the appointment of certain substitute decision makers for the adult; authorizes an adult to enter into a supported decision-making agreement with one or more supporters under certain circumstances; and provides immunity from civil or criminal liability under certain circumstances.

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia is a complicated disease, and over time, those who have this chronic disease lose their ability to communicate. According to the Penn Memory Center, "Supported decision making provides a space for people living with dementia and their care partners to safely navigate challenges associated with decision making and dementia. With the support of a care partner, people with dementia can continue to make decisions independently."ⁱ

More than 110,000 Marylanders currently live with this cruel disease, and they need help. They need an infrastructure for care, in so many different ways. This legislation empowers individuals with dementia, and their loved ones, and gives them a structure to make life-altering and life planning decisions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony, and we ask for a favorable report on House Bill 529.

ⁱ <https://pennmemorycenter.org/supported-decision-making/#:~:text=Supported%20decision%20making%20provides%20a,continue%20to%20make%20decisions%20independently.>