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**HB 161 Criminal Law-Exploitation of Vulnerable Adult
or Elderly Individual – Undue Influence
FAVORABLE**

House Judiciary Committee
January 27, 2022

Good afternoon Chairman Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Ted Meyerson, a volunteer for AARP MD and a member of AARP's National Fraud Watch Network. **AARP MD supports HB 161 Criminal Law-Exploitation of Vulnerable Adult or Elderly Individual – Undue Influence.** We thank Delegate Shetty for introducing this legislation.

HB 161 further defines “undue influence” as it pertains to the prohibition on the exploitation of a vulnerable adult or an elderly individual and adds factors the court must consider when determining whether property was obtained by undue influence.

The AARP National Fraud Watch Network is a free resource helping to educate the public and support victims. Its Help Line gets hundreds of calls every month reporting frauds and scams perpetrated against vulnerable adults by strangers, home aid workers, acquaintances, friends, and family members. AARP has a history of fighting for protections against elder financial exploitation and has been on the forefront of advocacy in support of federal and state laws and regulations preventing this type of abuse.

Generally, older adults trusting and polite – not in a rush to hang up on a caller. And older adults usually have more savings, more credit, and might own their home. That's what makes them attractive to thieves. The exploitations costs Americans more than 3 billion dollars every year. Criminals take advantage of older persons by doing things like forging their signature, coercing them into signing a will, turn over a deed, give them cash or give them large denomination gift cards. The affects can be financially ruinous, physically draining, and emotionally devastating for the victim and the victim's family.

AARP believes that States should enact and enforce laws that make it a criminal offense, with enhanced penalties, to abuse, neglect, or exploit a vulnerable individual.

AARP MD respectfully requests the House Judiciary Committee issue a favorable report. For questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-845

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