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SB 148 Victim Services Programs – Supplementing Federal Funding and Support (Victim Services Stabilization Act)

House Appropriations and House Judiciary Committees

March 21, 2023

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chairs Barnes and Clippinger and members of the House Appropriations and Judiciary Committees. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. On behalf of our almost 900,000 members, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 148 Victim Services Program -Supplementing Federal Funding and Support Services Stabilization Act.

SB 148 provides for development, support, and continuity of victim services programs to provide trauma-informed, high-quality services for victims of crime including elder crimes and to stabilize funding and support for victim services programs by supplementing federal funding for victim services programs when federal victims of crime act funding fluctuate.

Elder crime takes many forms. It can be financial, physical, psychological, or a combination of these. It can take place at home or in an institutional setting. There are few nationally representative studies on the prevalence of elder abuse. One such survey sponsored by the National Institute of Justice found that 11 percent of adults age 60 and older experienced at least one form of abuse in the prior year. Like other forms of crime, it often occurs in hidden circumstances and is underreported. A study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health estimated that only 1 in 14 cases of abuse is reported.

AARP believes that states should sufficiently fund state victim compensation programs. They should provide expedited compensation in emergencies. The crime survivor's age and physical health should be taken into consideration in deciding on payments.

We applaud Chairman Guzzone for introducing this bill and respectfully as for a favorable report. If you have questions, please contact me at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451. Thank you.

