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**HB 703 Public Health – Parkinson’s Disease Registry – Established  
House Health and Government Operations Committee  
FAVORABLE  
February 28, 2023**

Good afternoon Chair Peña-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Larry Zarzecki, Health Care Advocate for AARP Maryland. As you know, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the country. AARP Maryland support HB 703. We thank Delegate Kerr for championing this important bill.

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.

HB 703 establishes a Parkinson’s Disease Registry and a Parkinson’s Disease Registry Advisory Committee to establish a system for the collection and dissemination of information determining the incidence and prevalence of “Parkinson’s Disease. An individual with Parkinson’s may opt out of participating in the registry. A nurse practitioner, physician, or physician assistant who diagnoses patients with Parkinson’s disease and related to Parkinson Disease must report each case to the registry. The registry will be housed at the Maryland Department of Health.

Parkinson's disease is a chronic motor system disorder that normally affects patients over the age of 50. However, young-onset Parkinson's disease occurs in those aged 21-45. Common symptoms include tremors, muscle rigidity, slowness of movement, impaired balance and a shuffling gait.

The registry is a database that can be utilized for research on Parkinson's, for planning for health care requirements and for education of health care providers. This bill if passed will create a Parkinson Disease registry that will collect information about the disease and will be used by researchers. If enacted, researchers could use that data to identify patterns, look at trends across a population diverse in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and history of exposure to occupational and environmental toxins to help Marylanders who have Parkinson Disease.

For these reasons we respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on HB 703. For follow up or questions, please contact me at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling 410-302-8451.

