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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 797 - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Elder Abuse

**Judicial Proceedings Committee
 February 23, 2023**

SUPPORT

Background: Senate Bill 797, (SB797) would create a two-year task force to study elder abuse laws in our state, see where there are gaps, and make recommendations to the General Assembly to create or modify existing laws to better protect Maryland's older adults.

Written Comments: Every senior deserves to be safe, however, right now in Maryland, we know that is not the case. Several Associated agencies, including, Jewish Community Services (JCS), Comprehensive Housing Assistance Inc. (CHAI), and CHANA provide services to the rapidly aging Baltimore Community. CHANA offers a Jewish community response to the needs of people who have experienced abuse or trauma. This agency is dedicated to the elimination of domestic violence, sexual abuse, elder abuse and all forms of interpersonal violence. In 2013, CHANA initiated the state's first Elder Abuse program to prevent all forms of abuse including child to parent abuse, caregiver to senior abuse, or intimate partner situations.

Victims of elder abuse face obstacles to accessing services, transportation, and even shelter due to the additional healthcare needs of the aging population. It is imperative that we address, in a comprehensive approach, the gaps in our current elder abuse laws. This task force would be compiled of experts in different fields relating to older adults, from the Department of Aging, to area elder abuse organizations and Legal Aid. These groups will collaborate and study our current laws, suggest potential new laws, and learn from one another about how to best protect Maryland's seniors.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on SB797.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

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