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MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA), Shaoli Katana, Esq., Advocacy Director
Subject: Senate Bill 351 - Maryland Legal Services Corporation - Affordable Life, Wills, and Estate Planning for Seniors Program
Date: March 29, 2023
Position: Support

The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) supports **Senate Bill 351 - Maryland Legal Services Corporation - Affordable Life, Wills, and Estate Planning for Seniors Program**, with the language to align the bill with MLSC's income guidelines. SB 351 establishes the Affordable Life, Wills, and Estate Planning for Seniors Program in the Maryland Legal Services Corporation to provide seniors with moderate financial means access to affordable civil law-related services.

The MSBA represents more attorneys and judges than any other organization across the State in all practice areas. MSBA serves as the voice of Maryland's legal profession. Through its Laws Committee and various practice-specific sections, MSBA monitors and takes positions on legislation of importance to the legal profession.

The MSBA has been a strong advocate for civil legal aid and providing legal assistance to Marylanders in need, including areas that affect a citizen's shelter, safety, health, and financial security. This bill (with the sponsor amendment) would reach those who need this help the most – low-income senior Marylanders – and provide them with assistance on important estate planning issues including last will and testaments, powers of

attorney, special needs trusts, and advance health care directives. The advice of legal counsel in these matters is critically important, particularly for those of limited means, to ensure that future generations can benefit from proper estate planning and not lose claims to assets due to a mistake in drafting or execution of documents.

For the reasons stated above, MSBA supports SB 351 and respectfully requests a favorable report. For additional information, please feel free to contact Shaoli Katana at MSBA at shaoli@msba.org.