

Good afternoon, Chair Atterbeary, Vicechair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee. My name is Gertie Wilson, and I am a member of NAMI Maryland. But most importantly, I am caregiver.

My son was diagnosed with schizophrenia in his senior year of college and is now 41 years old. I have been retired for nine years and caring for my son is my full-time job. The amount of time and personal expense of supporting my son is difficult to calculate because as a parent, no amount of time is enough and any expense that I can possibly cover is not too much.

A caregiver tax credit would benefit Marylanders like me who do not have the resources to provide for all the healthcare, safety, mobility, and independence are loved ones need. Personally, I am a single parent and caregiver and I only have one bathroom in my house. My son needs his own restroom. I have gotten several estimates over the years, but I hesitate to pay for such a major renovation to my home when I never know if I will need money for other out-of-pocket expenses in support of my son. House Bill 32 specifically allows a tax credit for "alteration of the caregiver's primary residence to enable or assist the qualified family member to be more mobile, safe, or independent." My son is living with mental illness, but he is still a grown man. I wish he could have his own bathroom for the sake of his independence and dignity. House Bill 32 could help make this a reality.

For the sake of my son and for caregivers like me, please give a favorable report to House Bill 32.

Thank you.

Ms. Gertie Wilson