

February 1, 2024

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a non-profit that is dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

Family members and caregivers often play a large role in helping and supporting the millions of people in the U.S. who experience mental health conditions each year. Caregivers provide assistance with one or more activities for daily living. NAMI MD wants to ensure that caregivers are equipped with resources needed to provide care to their loved ones.

According to a 2021 study conducted by AARP, the average annual out-of-pocket cost for family caregivers is \$7,242. It's important to note that family caregivers devote their time to being a caregiver, meaning not only are they spending money out of pocket, but in some instances, they are entirely forgoing income. Offering a tax credit acknowledges and compensates for the potential income loss these caregivers may experience. By providing financial relief, the tax credit becomes a vital tool in enabling caregivers to continue their vital role without facing undue financial hardships. NAMI MD supports any efforts to decrease the financial burden of caregivers.

Caregivers who provide support to family members with mental illness play a crucial role in the well-being of their loved ones. Offering a tax credit for caregivers through HB32 is a strategic investment in the well-being of individuals, their families, and Marylanders at large.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

Kathryn S. Farinholt  
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