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**SB 891 Land Use and Real Property - Accessory Dwelling Units –  
Requirements and Prohibitions  
House Environmental and Transportation Committee  
February 25, 2025  
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. My name is Priscilla Kania, and I am a lead volunteer advocate with AARP Maryland, representing our nearly 850,000 members statewide. On behalf of AARP, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of **SB 891 – Land Use & Real Property – Accessory Dwelling Units – Requirements & Prohibitions**.

This important legislation aligns with AARP’s Livable Communities initiative, which promotes housing solutions that support safe, independent, and affordable living for residents of all ages, especially older Marylanders who wish to age in place. We sincerely thank Senator Washington for her leadership in sponsoring this bill.

### **The Importance of ADUs for Older Marylanders**

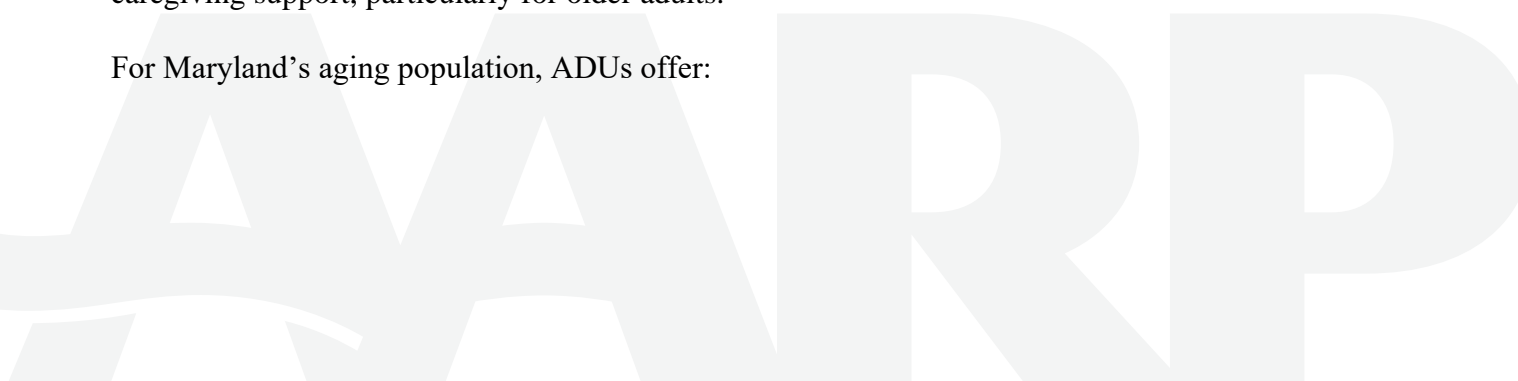
SB 891 establishes a statewide framework that encourages and facilitates the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in areas zoned for single-family housing. ADUs are an essential tool for addressing Maryland’s housing needs—particularly for older adults, caregivers, and multigenerational families.

AARP was honored to serve on the State Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Task Force because ADUs are a critical component of AARP’s commitment to housing accessibility and affordability. Many of the resources presented to the Task Force were sourced from AARP’s research, which highlights the proven benefits of ADUs in promoting aging-friendly communities.

### **What Are ADUs and Why Do They Matter?**

ADUs are independent housing units that can be created by remodeling an existing home, expanding an existing structure, or constructing a detached unit—such as converting a garage or building a small cottage. These flexible housing options provide economic stability and caregiving support, particularly for older adults.

For Maryland’s aging population, ADUs offer:



- Financial security – Homeowners can generate rental income to offset property taxes, home maintenance, and healthcare costs.
- Aging in place options – Older adults who wish to downsize can move into an ADU while renting their primary residence or housing family members.
- Caregiving solutions – ADUs allow older adults to live near caregivers, children, or loved ones while maintaining their independence.

## **What Older Adults Are Saying**

AARP research consistently shows that older adults overwhelmingly want to stay in their homes and communities as they age:

- 77% of people aged 50+ want to live in their community for as long as possible.
- 76% want to continue living in their current residence.
- 59% believe they can remain in their community, whether in their existing home (46%) or another home nearby (13%).
- 67% of older adults would consider an ADU to live near family while maintaining their own space.
- 70% would consider building an ADU for a loved one in need of care.

## **ADUs Promote Affordable Housing and Equity**

Beyond individual benefits, ADUs also serve a broader public interest by:

- Expanding affordable housing opportunities without requiring additional land development or costly infrastructure.
- Supporting economic diversity in established neighborhoods, creating more equitable access to quality schools, transportation, and job opportunities.
- Addressing the housing crisis, where rising home prices and rental costs place a heavy burden on older adults and middle-income families.
- Providing a cost-effective alternative to institutional care, reducing reliance on high-cost assisted living facilities.

ADUs were once commonplace in American housing, particularly before World War II, but were largely restricted by zoning laws that prioritized large-lot, single-family developments. Over time, these restrictions exacerbated economic and racial segregation, excluding families with modest incomes from communities with better resources.

Today, shifting demographics, economic pressures, and a national housing shortage have reinforced the need to modernize zoning laws and reintroduce ADUs as a viable housing solution.

## **Why Maryland Needs SB 891**

Aging in place is not just a personal preference—it is a public policy imperative. Maryland must take proactive steps to address the growing demand for housing that supports its aging population. SB 891 will:

- Establish statewide ADU standards to ensure clarity and consistency across jurisdictions.
- Provide older homeowners with more housing options that align with their financial and caregiving needs.
- Help local governments meet their housing and equity goals by encouraging compact, sustainable development.

## **AARP's Request**

AARP Maryland urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 891 to support Marylanders who want to age in place with dignity, stability, and independence.

For further questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy, AARP Maryland at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or 410-302-8451.