

Testimony Before the Senate Finance Committee

February 20, 2025

Senate Bill 659 - Consumer Protection – Electronic Funds Transfers – Regulations Elder Fraud Prevention Act of 2025

**** Support ****

The National Association of Social Workers is the largest professional association of social workers in the country, and the Maryland Chapter represents social workers across the state. On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our support for Senate Bill 659 Consumer Protection – Electronic Funds Transfers – Regulations (Elder Fraud Prevention Act of 2025).

As social workers who serve older adults, we are in favor of this bill because it would provide additional safeguards to prevent fraud against older adults that occurs through electronic funds transfers.

Electronic fund transfers are becoming an increasingly common way for elders to manage financial transactions, including bill payment, managing investments, and making purchases. Yet this greater reliance on electronic funds transfers comes with the risk of increasingly sophisticated scams.

Data from the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), in 2023, showed that people over the age of 60 lost over \$3.4 billion to fraud, representing an 11% increase from the previous year, with the average loss per victim being around \$34,000.

Increased protection from online fraud is particularly important for older adults because they are disproportionately targeted by scammers. Seniors may be particularly vulnerable because they are less familiar with online transactions and because they may have health or cognitive challenges that affect their ability to detect and avoid fraudulent schemes.

In addition, we believe that the state oversight that this bill requires would allow older adults and other consumers quicker and easier avenues to report suspected fraud and recoup lost funds.

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We believe that this bill is an important measure that will provide older adults and other Marylanders with more protections against fraud in electronic funds transfers and more effective means to report and resolve problems.

For these reasons, we ask that you give a favorable report on Senate Bill 659.

Respectfully,

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