



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**Senate Bill 376– Health Facilities - Delegation of Inspection Authority - Nursing Homes
Finance Committee – February 4, 2025
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2025 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of **SB 376**, a bill requiring the Secretary of Health, at the request of a county, to delegate to the county the authority to conduct site visits and full surveys of nursing homes and equally share certain costs of the inspection of nursing homes.

Timely inspection of nursing home conditions and investigation of complaints is critical to prevent the mistreatment of older adults in assisted living facilities, an all-too-common problem. Sixty-six percent of nursing home staff members admitted to abusing residents in a [2020 World Health Organization study](#). This abuse disproportionately affects older women, since [more than 70 percent of nursing home residents are women whose average age at admission is 80](#).

According to the Montgomery County Commission on Aging (COA), until June of 2021, Montgomery County inspected its nursing homes under an MOU with the state of Maryland. The county paid roughly 2/3 of the cost of such inspections and remained 100 percent compliant in conducting them. COA states that, in 2021, Maryland decided not to renew the MOU and took over state nursing home inspections. According to the COA, despite receiving \$3.2 million a year to conduct such inspections, the state has systematically failed to perform them. In fact, [more than 2/3 of Maryland's 222 nursing homes have not had annual inspections in the past 15 months, as required by CMS](#). Ninety percent of nursing homes in Montgomery County have not been inspected in the last 15 months, according to a COA analysis of provider [data](#). By a conservative estimate, based on number of beds and average occupancy, **several thousand of Maryland's most vulnerable older residents are currently living in unknown conditions in Maryland nursing homes that have not been inspected** (COA). Common sense and [anecdotal experience](#) show that a lack of, or delay, in conducting inspections can cause abuse to occur or worsen, resulting in injury or death of nursing home residents and great anguish to their loved ones.

We urge you not to leave Maryland's nursing home residents "[Uninspected and Neglected](#)" as the title of a 2023 U.S. Senate Committee on Aging report on nursing inspections put it, but allow counties who are willing and able to undertake these inspections to do so. The safety and dignity of our nursing home population hangs in the balance.

We ask for your support for SB 376 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Tazeen Ahmad
WDC President

Diana Rubin
WDC Aging Subcommittee

JoAnne Koravos
WDC Advocacy Co-Chair