



**Statement of the Maryland Federation of
National Active and Retired Federal Employees
House Health and Government Operations Committee Hearing
February 13, 2025
On HB 576–Health Care Facilities – Nursing Homes and Assisted Living
Programs – Video Recorders
(Position – FAV)**

Good afternoon, Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. I am Robert M. Doyle testifying on behalf of the State Legislative Committee of the Maryland National and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), representing approximately 317,000 federal annuitants and employees in Maryland. For the continuing protection and benefit of our members and all Maryland seniors, we support and ask you for a favorable report on HB 576 entitled Health Care Facilities – Nursing Home and Assisted Living Programs – Video Recorders. We thank the MD Office of Attorney General for requesting this Bill and Speaker Jones for introducing it.

HB 576 will require nursing homes and assisted living programs to install, operate and maintain video surveillance equipment in the common areas of those facilities to capture the abuse, neglect or exploitation of the residents. The Bill also will require the facilities to make the recordings available to law enforcement and State Agency personnel who have a need for the recordings in their investigations.

At present, 14 states have regulations explicitly allowing the use of cameras in nursing home rooms, and two -- Maryland and New Jersey have programs or guidelines involving the use of resident-requested cameras. Based on information I reviewed while researching this bill, I believe Maryland would be the first state in the Nation to require video cameras in nursing homes.

The problem of seniors experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation is a serious problem in Maryland (indeed, everywhere). The most recent data I could find from relevant Maryland agencies shows the following:

□ **Maryland Department of Aging, Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:** Of the 3,711 complaints investigated by the Ombudsman Program in FY 2021, 229 of the investigated reports were alleged resident abuse cases.¹

□ **The Maryland Department of Health, Office of Health Care Quality:** In FY 2021 the Office of Health Care Quality's Long Term Care Unit received 1,336 reports of alleged abuse and 1,179 allegations of neglect.²

□ **Maryland Department of Human Services, Office of Adult Services, Adult Protective Services:** In FY2021, the Adult Protective Services Program received 7,116 reports of abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults 18 years of age and older. Of these cases, 570 involved continuing Adult Protective Services case management services to monitor and assist in reducing on-going risk factors.³

□ **Maryland Attorney General's Office, Medicaid Fraud Control Unit:** The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit opened 45 abuse and neglect cases in State FY 2021. The Unit addressed each of those cases through factual investigation, legal review, and where appropriate, legal action.⁴

These are criminal acts. It is a criminal offense for a household member, family member, or anyone responsible for the care of a vulnerable adult to neglect or abuse that person, or to intentionally and maliciously inflict severe emotional distress. If such abuse or neglect results in sexual abuse, serious injury, or death, it constitutes a first-degree felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$10,000. Abuse, neglect, or severe emotional distress that does not meet the criteria for first-degree offenses may still be prosecuted as a second-degree

¹ <https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/state-long-term-care-ombudsman.aspx>

² <https://health.maryland.gov/ohcq/Pages/home.aspx>

³ <https://dhs.maryland.gov/office-of-adult-services/adult-protective-services/>

⁴ <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/>

misdemeanor. Conviction of this misdemeanor carries a penalty of up to five years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$5,000.⁵

In the 2023 Session, the Assembly passed, and the Governor signed into law a bill to establish the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Elder Abuse. In its preliminary report to the Governor, the Task Force noted that “based off the U.S. census, Maryland Department of Planning, it is expected that Maryland residents 60 and older will surpass the population of Maryland residents 18 and younger for the first time in the history of our state. With the expectation of serious mental or physical infirmity or dependence increasing with advanced age, there is reason to suspect that the incidence of abuse and neglect of older adults in Maryland will rise as their population increases.”⁶

We look forward to the Final Report, and we hope it includes recommendations for legal requirements like those in this Bill for the crucial task

⁵ [Md. Code, Criminal Law §§ 3-604, 3-605](#)

⁶ Preliminary Report of the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Elder Abuse, by letter dated April 30, 2024, from Andrew Rabinovitz, Chair, Task Force, to Governor Wes Moore.

of protecting the health and well-being of nursing home and assisted living facilities residents.

As a powerful weapon against Elder Abuse, we applaud the introduction of HB 576 and respectfully request a favorable report.

Thank you.

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