



Maryland Continuing Care Residents Association
Protecting the Future of Continuing Care Residents
The Voice of Continuing Care Residents at Annapolis

SUBJECT: House Bill 1291- Health Facilities - Assisted Living Programs - Family Councils
COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair
DATE: March 6, 2025
POSITION: **Favorable with Amendment**

The Maryland Continuing Care Residents Association (MaCCRA) is a not-for-profit organization representing the residents in continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs). Maryland has over 20,000 older adults living in 38 licensed CCRCs. The principal purpose of MaCCRA is to protect and enhance the rights, well-being, and financial security of current and future residents while maintaining the viability of the providers whose interests are frequently the same as their residents. MaCCRA supports efforts to enhance transparency, accountability, financial security, and preserve existing protections in law and regulation for current and future CCRC residents statewide.

On behalf of MaCCRA, we support House Bill 1291 with an amendment. Since President Reagan signed the Federal Nursing Home Reform Act in 1987, **skilled nursing home residents** have the right to form resident councils and family councils. These councils foster community building among residents, their families, and the staff. They provide an opportunity for families to share their observations with one another. Many family members are able to visit only at a particular time of day, e.g., after work or on weekends, and have no idea what the facility is like at other times of day, and value hearing from others what they hear and see, both good and bad. They often arrange for social events for residents, supplementing what the facility provides.

House Bill 1291 provides for the same kind of family councils for residents of Assisted Living facilities, who deserve no less.

To further strengthen the formation of a family council we ask for consideration of the following amendment to allow the MD Long Term Care Ombudsman to create a family council. This aligns with similar authority granted for nursing home family councils under Maryland COMAR - Sec. 32.03.02.10. Family and Resident Council Requirements. "the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program shall support the organization and development of family and resident councils in nursing homes."

AMENDMENT:

Page 2, line 11 after "Program" INSERT "**OR BY THE MARYLAND LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN**".

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report with amendment on House Bill 1291.

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