

To: The Chair and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

Fr: The Maryland/DC Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

Date: March 3, 2025

Re: HB 1291 – Health Facilities – Assisted Living Programs – Family Councils

Position: Support with Amendment

The Maryland/DC Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys is an organization of attorneys dedicated to serving our seniors. We are pleased to support HB 1291 which seeks to permit the owner of an assisted living facility to establish a family council. This legislation is a critical step toward enhancing the quality of care and community engagement within assisted living facilities, ultimately benefiting both residents and their loved ones.

There are, however, two amendments that could strengthen this significant legislation. We urge the Committee to expand its reach to include all assisted living facilities, regardless of size. In addition, authorizing the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman to create a family council could help insure the establishment of this vital organization if the facility is not able or willing to see to its creation.

Family councils serve as essential forums for open communication, collaboration, and advocacy. They provide family members with a structured way to share concerns, exchange information, and work alongside facility management to improve the overall experience for residents. All too often, family and friends are focused on the care of their loved one and may not have the time or expertise to spearhead the creation of such a council. By allowing facility owners or the State Ombudsman to initiate the formation of a family council, this legislation fosters greater transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of those in assisted living.

We suggest the following amendments:

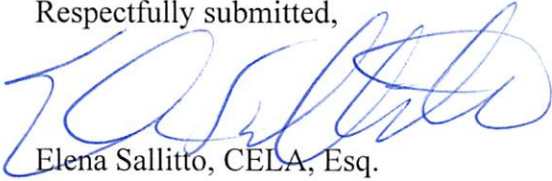
Deleting Section (B) in its entirety.

Adding the following:

(2)(I) Subject to subparagraph (II) of this paragraph, a family council may be created by the owner, operator or staff of an assisted living facility, **or by the Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman.**

We urge you and your colleagues to support this legislation, recognizing its potential to positively impact the lives of assisted living residents and their families. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to policies that promote the dignity, safety, and well-being of our aging population.

Respectfully submitted,



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On behalf of the MD/DC Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

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