

Testimony Before the House Judiciary Committee

February 11, 2025

**House Bill 604 Vulnerable and Senior Adults - Theft of Property by Caregiver,
Family Member, or Household Member - Prohibition**

**** Support ****

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our strong support for House Bill 604 Vulnerable and Senior Adults – Theft of Property by Caregiver, Family Member or Household Member - Prohibition

As social workers who serve Marylanders with disabilities and those with chronic and terminal illnesses, we have seen firsthand the devastating effects that financial exploitation can have on older and vulnerable adults. This bill is crucial because it recognizes the unique position of trust that caregivers, family members, and household members hold, and it ensures that those in positions of power are held accountable when they abuse that trust. Senior and vulnerable adults are often isolated, less likely to report abuse, and more likely to fear retaliation if they do so. In addition, these individuals may struggle to understand or assert their rights to their money or property.

This bill provides necessary protections to ensure that older and vulnerable adults do not become victimized by their family members, household members and caregivers. We believe that the proposed civil and criminal penalties send a strong message in support of the rights of this population. This bill is a crucial step forward in safeguarding vulnerable adults from financial exploitation, holding offenders accountable, and ensuring that seniors and vulnerable individuals can live with dignity and respect in their communities.

For these reasons, we ask that you give a favorable report on House Bill 604.

Respectfully,

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