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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

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

**Judiciary Committee**

**February 11, 2025**

**Support as Amended by the Sponsor**

**Background:** If enacted, House Bill 604 with sponsor amendments, would make changes to the criminal code article § 8-801 which criminalizes financial crimes committed against vulnerable adults. Those convicted of a felony under this statute are subject to mandatory exclusion from working for any Federal or State funded healthcare system for a period of five years. Currently § 8-801 requires the State to prove that the property was obtained from the victim by “deception, intimidation, or undue influence.” However, deception is very narrowly defined in Maryland’s criminal code, requiring a broken trust where the victim is misled. Therefore, a caregiver who steals money or a credit card from a vulnerable adult in their care, without their knowledge, is not conduct covered by the financial exploitation statute. This bill aims to revise § 8-801 to make financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult an aggravated offense due to a victim’s vulnerability and the caregiver’s status, addressing this gap in the law.

**Written Comments:** The Baltimore Jewish Council represents the interests of CHANA, an agency of the Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore. CHANA is a domestic violence, sexual abuse, and elder abuse agency that serves Baltimore County and City. CHANA provides safety planning, supportive counseling, shelter, crisis intervention, case management and legal advocacy. CHANA has served far too many older adult abuse victims whose caregivers have used them for financial gain. This bill would give victims the ability to seek financial justice and help others from falling victim to the same exploiters.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB604 as amended by the sponsor.

*The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.*