

Testimony Before the House Judiciary Committee

February 13, 2025

House Bill 542 - Adult Protective Services - Investigations and Disclosure of Information

**** Support ****

The National Association of Social Workers is the largest professional association of social workers in the country, and the Maryland Chapter represents social workers across the state. On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our support for House Bill 542 - Adult Protective Services – Investigations and Disclosure of Information.

As social workers who serve older adults, we are in favor of this bill because it would strengthen the ability of Adult Protective Services to investigate and seek resolution of cases involving abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults.

Maryland's Adult Protective Services conducts more than 7,000 investigations each year, based on reports received in local APS offices. Some of the allegations in these reports involve potential Federal crimes. One example is financial fraud, which could include identity theft, imposter scams, mail fraud, investment-related fraud, and other crimes. (In 2022, Maryland ranked sixth in the country for investment-related fraud.) Another Federal crime that APS investigates is human trafficking. In addition, other forms of abuse or exploitation that cross state lines may be considered Federal crimes.

This bill would allow Adult Protective Services investigators to share information with Federal law enforcement, including Postal Inspectors, who often have critical knowledge about crimes related to the mail that impact vulnerable adults. This information sharing strengthens APS' ability to complete its investigations, protect vulnerable victims, and hold perpetrators accountable.

For these reasons, we ask that you give a favorable report on House Bill 542.

Respectfully,

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