



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

February 13, 2025

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

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

House Bill 542 enables a local department of social services to disclose information to, and request assistance from, federal law enforcement entities such as the U.S. Postal Inspection Service to investigate cases of abuse or exploitation of a vulnerable person. Because House Bill 542 would facilitate greater information sharing and assistance from federal law enforcement entities in furtherance of the protection of vulnerable adults in Montgomery County, I strongly support the bill.

Relevant sections of the Family Law Article direct local departments of social services to investigate suspected abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults and enables them to request assistance of law enforcement. Family Law-Article §14-101(i) currently defines law enforcement as “State, county, or municipal police department, bureau, or agency”, but does not include federal law enforcement. When local departments of social services (in Montgomery County, Adult Protective Services (APS) within the Department of Health and Human Services) investigate suspected abuse or exploitation, the cases can involve the use of the mail to perpetuate the crimes. Investigation of mail fraud otherwise involves the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, a federal law enforcement entity, however, because the current relevant definition of law enforcement does not include federal entities, our local department is not permitted by State statute to share information with or request assistance from the U.S. Postal Investigation Service. House Bill 542 would enable the disclosure of information by APS to federal law enforcement such as U.S. Postal Inspection Service and permit APS to request assistance from the same.

Because our APS investigators could enhance their ability to protect vulnerable adults from being victimized by disclosing information to, and requesting assistance from, federal law enforcement entities, I support House Bill 542 and respectfully request that the committee issues a favorable report.