

March 4, 2026

Good Afternoon Members of the Budget and Tax Committee:

My name is Mildred Collick, and I am a resident of Northeast Baltimore. I am a mother, grandmother, and widow. I am 85 years old and recently retired at 83 years old.

I went to my local senior center to workout and while there I heard someone speaking about energy assistance and was encouraged to apply so it can help me with my BGE bill. However, I needed assistance with applying for this program and the application process. My local senior center told me to contact the Economic Action Maryland Fund for assistance with the application process. I contacted this agency and was connected to a SOAR Counselor (Securing Older Adults with Resources) and they helped me complete the application and informed me about the supporting documents I needed to attach with my application. In addition, they followed up with me to ensure I didn't need any other assistance. They continued to follow up with me until I was approved for energy assistance. Their continued communication and support made me feel valued and well cared for during the entire process.

We seniors have contributed so much to the state of Maryland. There are not enough programs like SOAR that are geared towards helping older adults. SOAR walks us through this process and supports us. I urge you to fund SOAR so more seniors can receive help to navigate this next chapter in our lives.