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Economic Matters Committee

Chair
Workers' Compensation
Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Chairwoman Kris Valderrama
Economic Matters Committee
House Office Building, Room 230
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Valderrama, Vice-Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

HB994 strengthens consumer protections for Marylanders by establishing clear registration and financial security requirements for sellers of travel services operating in our State. It ensures travel providers meet baseline accountability standards before collecting money from consumers, and it gives the Maryland Department of Labor the tools needed to oversee and enforce these protections.

I am bringing this bill back to honor the Wurie family and the Marylanders we lost in Summer 2024 while traveling for the religious pilgrimage of Hajj. This tragedy should never have happened, and it was caused by travel organizers who failed to provide the promised documentation and basic support travelers needed. Their loss exposed a serious gap in oversight and makes clear that Maryland must act now to ensure this never happens again.

HB994 addresses this gap by requiring sellers of travel and independent agents to file annually with the Department of Labor, pay a \$300 filing fee, and prohibiting them from accepting payment unless they are properly registered. The bill also requires proof of at least \$1,000,000 in professional liability and errors and omissions insurance, and requires sellers of travel to submit a list of affiliated independent agents each year to strengthen transparency and oversight. Finally, it establishes the Sellers of Travel Services Registration Fund to support administration and enforcement, and directs the Department to provide public notice, enforce compliance, and adopt regulations to carry out the law.

HB994 is a common sense measure that strengthens consumer protections, increases accountability in the travel industry, and helps ensure Marylanders are not put at risk by irresponsible or bad actors. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 994.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian A. Boafo'.

Delegate Adrian A. Boafo