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Senate Finance Committee

Re: SB 809 – Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program - Feasibility Study

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Madam Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shari Bailey. I am a mother and caregiver to my daughter Laila, who is nonverbal, lives with autism, and has a rare genetic syndrome. I am also the founder of Laila's Gift, a Maryland nonprofit dedicated to supporting families of children with non-apparent disabilities.

I am here today in support of SB 809, which calls for a feasibility study to explore a statewide program that would provide direct financial support to family caregivers.

Caregiving is the invisible infrastructure that keeps our health care and support systems functioning. Across Maryland, families provide daily care for loved ones with disabilities, chronic illness, aging-related needs, and complex medical conditions. Much of this care happens quietly in homes, often without compensation or meaningful financial support.

For many families, **caregiving is not temporary. It is a lifelong responsibility.**

As the caregiver to a child with complex needs, caregiving shapes every aspect of our daily lives, including our financial reality. Families like mine often face significant out-of-pocket expenses just to ensure our children receive the care and support they need to live safely and with dignity.

For my daughter alone, the costs of medical supplies, therapies, adaptive equipment, specialized clothing, assistive technologies, and other medically necessary supports can total more than \$3,000 per month. These are not optional expenses. They are essential supports that allow my daughter to communicate, participate in the world around her, and remain safe.

Many caregivers reduce their work hours or leave the workforce entirely because the demands of care make traditional employment difficult or impossible. At the same time, the expenses associated with caregiving continue to grow.



This bill recognizes an important reality: **caregiving is work.**

By studying the feasibility of providing monthly support to caregivers, Maryland has an opportunity to better understand how strengthening caregiver infrastructure could stabilize families, support individuals with disabilities and older adults in their homes and reduce reliance on more costly institutional care systems.

SB0809 does not create the program today. It simply ensures that Maryland gathers the data necessary to understand the economic and social impact of supporting caregivers.

For families like mine and for the many caregivers across Maryland, this type of thoughtful policy evaluation is an important step forward.

As the founder of Laila's Gift, I work with many families navigating similar challenges. The financial strain associated with caregiving is real, and it is widespread.

Senate Bill 809 presents a practical and compassionate step toward better understanding the needs of family caregivers and identifying opportunities to strengthen resources and coordination that support caregivers and their loved ones across Maryland.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 809.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,



Shari Bailey
Founder, CEO, Caregiver
Laila's Gift