



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

*Baltimore Jewish
Council*

*Catholic Charities of
Baltimore*

*Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council*

Church of the Brethren

*Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland*

*Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County*

*Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland*

*Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging*

*Maryland Catholic
Conference*

*Mental Health
Association of Maryland*

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

*National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter*

Presbytery of Baltimore

*The Coordinating
Center*

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The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN) is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that support policies that meet the housing, health, and quality of care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN supports HB 1117. This legislation, as amended, plays an important and constructive role in strengthening Maryland's understanding of elopement and the tools used to address it, particularly for older adults living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, as well as individuals with other cognitive, developmental, or neurological conditions.

HB 1117 clearly defines elopement, recognizing that it involves situations in which an individual may not be able to recognize danger or safely return without assistance. Wandering, or elopement, is one of the most dangerous and common dementia-related behaviors. Six in ten people living with dementia will wander at least once, often becoming lost or confused even in familiar settings, and this risk exists at every stage of the disease. Wandering places enormous emotional and logistical strain on family caregivers, long-term care providers, adult day programs, and first responders. Establishing a clear definition in statute helps ensure that agencies, providers, and communities approach elopement with the seriousness it requires.

The bill also creates a shared language across State systems by defining elopement response devices. These definitions reflect how modern safety tools function today, including wearable technologies, sensors, and communication-enabled devices that support rapid location and response. By acknowledging these tools as legitimate assistive and safety supports, HB 1117 helps reduce confusion and inconsistency across programs, providers, and settings.

Lastly, HB 1117 authorizes existing advisory bodies to recommend the use of these devices as safety tools. This ensures that guidance is informed by expertise, lived experience, and evolving best practices.

HB 1117 will lay essential groundwork by establishing definitions, guidance, and a common framework Maryland can build on over time. For these reasons, MSCAN urges a favorable report on HB 1117.