



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Gloria Brown Burnett, Interim Secretary

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: TESTIMONY ON SB 809 - SUPPORTING OUR CAREGIVER INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM - FEASIBILITY STUDY - POSITION: INFORMATION

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully submits information on Senate Bill 809 (SB 809).

With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS provides preventative and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment development and career opportunities to assist Marylanders in reaching their full potential. SB 809 would mandate that the Office of the Comptroller, in partnership with DHS, conduct a comprehensive study on the feasibility of establishing a state-funded program to provide monthly stipends to informal caregivers supporting elderly relatives, individuals with Alzheimer's or dementia, and children or adults with disabilities.

SB 809 would require the Office of the Comptroller to study how Maryland can pay family members who stay home to care for elderly or disabled relatives. Today, more than 1.1 million Marylanders¹ provide this care for free, often risking their jobs or savings to do it. The study proposed by SB 809 would analyze the program's potential impact on Maryland's labor force participation, tax revenues, and overall economic vitality, while charging DHS with identifying administrative costs, exploring optimal stipend amounts, and coordinating with the Departments of Health and Aging. This two-year collaborative effort, which would take effect July 1, 2026, requires a final report of findings and recommendations submitted to the General Assembly by July 1, 2027, before the act officially expires on June 30, 2028.

¹ <https://www.aarp.org/states/maryland/cus-md-2025/>

SB 809 would require DHS to assist the Comptroller's Office by identifying available and potential federal, State, and local funding sources for the program, potential administrative needs, administrative costs, and operating costs; and exploring appropriate amounts for caregiver stipends that maximize the benefit to the State economy and minimize the fiscal impact on the State budget. The Department predicts that there would be significant offsets to existing state expenditures and revenues that could be measured through thoughtful analysis.

Given the significant uncertainty in federal policy and the escalating fiscal shortfalls forecasted through Fiscal Year 2028, DHS urges caution against legislation that increases expenditures or diverts revenue without sustainable funding offsets. In light of the current fiscal crisis, the state must remain disciplined and strategic in its funding decisions to protect essential services for all Marylanders.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this information to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. If you require additional information, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at justin.hayes1@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gloria Brown Burnett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gloria Brown Burnett
Interim Secretary