

April 1, 2026 - HB1117 Written Testimony - Finance Committee

HB1117 - Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council and the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs - Recommendations for Elopement Response Devices

Position: **SUPPORT**

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

My name is **Reginald A. Lawson**, and I write you expressing strong support for **House Bill 1117**.

I am a former caregiver for my mother, who lived 2-hours from me. I tried, with inconsistent success, to engage others to help with watching out for her. Removing her from her home presented emotional, financial and physical challenges for everyone. I learned painfully, it takes more than prayers, good intentions and luck to protect her. I needed to facilitate tangible means to understand and reduce the threats embedded in dementia's lifespan.

During my 4-year caregiving journey, I employed technology where I could. This included cameras, speakers, motion detectors, talking smoke and carbon monoxide sensors, automated lighting and door locking, water and gas shutoff valves systems. This worked fine, until one day she did not return home.

That 2-hour drive that day was filled with terrifying pains of fear, guilt, and helplessness. Alerted family, neighbors and first responders did their best to locate her. I discovered her 4-hours later, soiled and scared in a bedroom closet. I was thankful for her safety, apologetic to her for not finding her sooner, and to everyone else for indulging their time and emotions. I subsequently purchased, in 2012, GPS-infused sneakers which helped to track and locate her quickly during multiple elopements.

Here are some impacts of having responsive devices:

- It allowed me to constantly monitor her active and rest times.
- It provided insights to her range of movement in and out of the house.
- It helped me analyze her behavior patterns for better understanding of her dementia.
- It controlled my anxiety by reducing time to find her and lessening her exposure to danger.
- It respected the efforts, emotions and cost of family, neighbors and first responders.

Responsive devices have improved in cost and performance which will greatly help stakeholders caring for those who have lost their self-reliance. Approving **House Bill 1117** would enhance response, reduce anxiety, and provide greater safety - for caregivers, families, neighbors, and first responders assisting those that are prone to elopement.

I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on House Bill 1117**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Reginald A. Lawson
1213 Ring Bill Loop
Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
reginaldalawson@gmail.com