



Bill: HB 1117 - Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council and the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs - Recommendations for Elopement Response Devices

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: April 1, 2026

On behalf of the 127,200 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's disease and their 247,000 caregivers, the Alzheimer's Association supports *HB 1117 - Virginia I. Jones Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Council and the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs - Recommendations for Elopement Response Devices*. As amended, this bill takes an important step toward improving understanding of and consistency around elopement/wandering risks and safety tools for individuals at risk of elopement, including people living with dementia.

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. For people living with dementia, elopement can quickly become a life-threatening emergency. Six in ten people living with dementia will elope at least once, and many do so repeatedly, often becoming lost or disoriented even in familiar settings.¹ Because individuals with dementia can lose the ability to recognize familiar places and faces, elopement can occur at any stage of the disease, and its unpredictability creates fear and stress for caregivers and families.

Establishing a shared, statutory definition helps ensure that families, providers, first responders, and state systems are aligned in understanding the risks and urgency involved. Furthermore, the bill defines elopement response devices in a way that reflects how modern safety tools function today, including wearable technologies, sensors, and communication-enabled devices that support rapid location and response.

By establishing clear definitions, acknowledging modern technology, and authorizing advisory bodies to recommend elopement response devices as safety tools, HB 1117 lays a foundation for future progress. For these reasons, the Alzheimer's Association respectfully requests a favorable report. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org with any questions.

¹ <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/wandering>