



Bill: HB 724 - Employment Discrimination - Caregiver Status

Committee: House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Position: Favorable

Date: February 19, 2026

On behalf of the 127,200 Marylanders living with Alzheimer's disease, the Alzheimer's Association supports HB 724. This bill will add "caregiver status" as a protected class under Maryland's employment discrimination laws, an important step toward safeguarding the economic security and wellbeing of families navigating dementia.

Dementia is a fast-growing public health crisis in Maryland. Newly released state data shows that 148,470 Marylanders aged 65 and older – **approximately 15% of our older adults – live with Alzheimer's or another dementia**, aligning with national estimates that rank Maryland highest in Alzheimer's prevalence.^{1,2} Nationally, 83% percent of the help provided to older adults comes from family members, friends or other unpaid caregivers. Nearly 50% of all caregivers who provide help to older adults do so for someone living with dementia. In Maryland, there are an estimated **258,000 Marylanders caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's, providing 292 million hours of unpaid care, valued at \$7 billion.**³

Dementia takes a devastating toll on caregivers: dementia caregivers experience significantly higher physical, emotional, and financial hardship than caregivers supporting individuals without dementia. When caregivers also face workplace discrimination or inflexibility, they are forced to reduce hours, miss promotions, or leave the workforce entirely, losses that can compound over time to impact financial stability and quality of life.

HB 724 addresses these realities by prohibiting employment discrimination based on caregiver status. This protection is important for dementia caregivers, whose responsibilities are uniquely demanding and can be long-lasting. Ensuring that caregivers cannot be fired, demoted, or denied advancement solely because they support a loved one with dementia will help Maryland families maintain financial stability while continuing to provide the care their loved ones rely on.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 724. Please contact Megan Peters, Director of Government Affairs at mrpeters@alz.org with any questions.

¹ Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Prevalence Data Report, November 2025, Maryland Department of Health. <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/ccdpc/healthyaging/Documents/Alzheimer%e2%80%99s%20Disease%20and%20Related%20Dementias%20Prevalence%20Data%20Report%20-%20MDH%20Letterhead.docx.pdf>

² Dhana K, Beck T, Desai P, Wilson RS, Evans DA, Rajan KB. Prevalence of Alzheimer's disease dementia in the 50 US states and 3142 counties: A population estimate using the 2020 bridged-race postcensal from the National Center for Health Statistics. *Alzheimers Dement.* 2023 Oct;19(10):4388-4395. doi: 10.1002/alz.13081. Epub 2023 Jul 17. PMID: 37458371; PMCID: PMC10593099.

³ 2025 Maryland Alzheimer's Statistics, Alzheimer's Association. <https://www.alz.org/getmedia/465b005a-2060-41ac-bbb1-bb79ea5c18c1/maryland-alzheimers-facts-figures.pdf>