

February 19, 2026

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and distinguished members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee,

NAMI Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a network of more than 60,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illnesses, their families, and the wider community.

HB724 is a crucial piece of legislation that would prohibit workplace and employment discrimination regarding the caregiver status of an individual. This prohibition would add caregiver status to the already existing list of workplace discrimination prohibitions that include race, sex, and religion, among other things. This addition would be a crucial step to ensure that those who care for young children or adult family members who may be suffering from a disability or complications of old age are protected from employment discrimination. Many individuals rely on their families for support and caregivers have an obligation to their loved ones. Caregiver status is certainly not something that should ever be held against an individual regarding their employment.

We at NAMI Maryland value the extreme importance of caregivers and the role they play for their families, especially caring for family members struggling with mental illnesses or disabilities. Many people, both children and adults, who are suffering from mental illness rely on their families as their primary method of support and care. These caregivers need our help, not our criticism and discrimination. The last thing someone who is trying to work and care for their family member in need should experience is discrimination from an employer for trying to support their family's livelihood while also prioritizing the needs of a family member with specific needs. NAMI Maryland urges a favorable report on HB724.

Stephanie Slowly-Little
Executive Director
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland

Contact: Morgan Mills-DiEnno
Compass Government Relations
Mmills@compassadvocacy.com