



**LAILA'S GIFT**  
*Celebrating One Gift at a Time*

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House Health Committee

Re: HB1434 – Maryland Department of Health – Caregiver Resource Webpage – Establishment

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Madam Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shari Bailey, and I am the Founder of Laila's Gift, a Maryland nonprofit dedicated to supporting families of individuals with non-apparent disabilities and advocating for policies that improve safety and quality of life for caregivers and those they support. I am also the mother and caregiver of my daughter, Laila, who is nonverbal, lives with autism, and has a rare genetic syndrome.

I am here today to share my heartfelt support for House Bill 1434 and to explain why this legislation is so important for caregivers like me.

For many families, the process of finding resources and support is extremely complex and overwhelming. Caregivers are often navigating multiple systems at once — healthcare providers, disability services, education systems, community programs, and state agencies. Each system has its own website, eligibility requirements, and points of contact. Trying to locate the right information while also caring for a loved one can feel nearly impossible.

A centralized caregiver resource webpage, as proposed in this bill, could be a true game-changer for families across Maryland.

When my daughter Laila was first identified as being at risk of elopement, meaning she may wander from a safe environment without understanding danger, I remember how difficult it was to find clear and reliable information. As a parent, you are suddenly faced with urgent questions:

Where can I find guidance on safety planning?

What resources exist to help prevent elopement?

What steps should families take to prepare for an emergency?



Unfortunately, that information is often scattered across many different agencies and organizations, making it difficult for families to find when they need it most.

A centralized webpage could bring together critical resources in one place — including information on safety planning, emergency preparedness, caregiver supports, respite programs, disability services, and aging services. Having this information accessible in a single location would help caregivers respond more quickly, make informed decisions, and feel less alone while navigating these challenges.

This legislation also recognizes that caregiving spans the entire lifespan. Families supporting children with developmental disabilities, adults with complex medical needs, and older adults living with Alzheimer's disease or dementia all face similar challenges when trying to locate the right resources.

By creating a single, reliable starting point for caregivers, this bill would help Maryland families better understand the programs available to them and connect to the support they need.

The recent **AARP Maryland report** documented that there are more than **1.2 million family caregivers across the state of Maryland**.

For more than **1.2 million caregivers in Maryland**, this resource has the potential to significantly reduce the burden of navigating complex systems and help families more easily find the support they need.

As the Founder of Laila's Gift, I work with many caregivers across Maryland who experience these navigation challenges every day. The need for clearer, more accessible information is one of the most common concerns we hear from families.

House Bill 1434 represents a practical and compassionate step toward supporting caregivers and strengthening coordination across state resources.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **issue a favorable report on House Bill 1434**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,



Shari Bailey  
Founder, CEO, Caregiver  
Laila's Gift