

March 11, 2026

House Health Committee
HB1117 - Elopement Response Devices - Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program Coverage and Provision Under State Programs

Position: **SUPPORT**

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

My name is **Reginald A. Lawson**. I am writing to express strong support for **House Bill 1117** requiring the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, subject to certain limitations, to provide coverage for approved elopement response devices and associated supports to certain individuals under certain circumstances.

I am a former caregiver for my mother, who lived two 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. Therefore, I needed to facilitate means to assist in being the best guardian I could.

During my four-year caregiving journey, I employed technology where I could. This included cameras, speakers, sensors (motion, talking smoke and carbon monoxide) and automated systems (lighting, door locking, water and gas shutoff).

There were two key facts: 1) this approach provided enhanced support, and 2) it only worked as long as she remained in, or within twenty feet of, the house. I purchased GPS-infused sneakers which helped to track and locate her when she eloped, thereby reducing time to find her and lessening her exposure to danger.

All of this required an advanced high speed-upload internet service and massive storage devices/services to capture data. Technology allowed me to monitor her activities, rest and risks at any time, per internet systems performance. It also allowed me to analyze behavior patterns.

Those GPS sneakers, at the time, cost three hundred dollars (\$300). The equipment cost approximately seven thousand dollars (\$7,000), and the ongoing service costs were approximately four hundred dollars (\$400) a month. That was 2012 cost! I was fortunate, because dementia's threats do not wait, to get a loan to immediately facilitate the costs. The risks and dangers of eloping are greater today, but the cost and options to circumvent elopement today are different.

Most people may not have the means (qualify for a loan) or savings to afford the leverage technology can provide.

I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report on House Bill 1117** which would provide families with the critical financial, emotional and protection benefits of elopement response devices.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Reginald A. Lawson". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Reginald A. Lawson
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