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**House Health & Government Operations Committee**

**House Bill 162 - Department of Aging - Maryland Access Point - Dementia-Friendly Communities**

**Position:** Support

Laila's Gift respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of House Bill 162. Our organization is dedicated to advancing policies that protect individuals at every stage of life and ensure that systems are designed to support safety, dignity, and well-being over time—not only in moments of crisis.

HB 162 reflects this life-cycle approach by strengthening supports that help individuals and families navigate critical transitions and vulnerabilities before harm occurs.

Too often, public systems are structured to respond only after a failure, injury, or tragedy has occurred. A life-cycle framework recognizes that meaningful protection requires early intervention, continuity of care, and sustained support as individuals move through childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and aging.

HB 162 advances this approach by reinforcing policies that prioritize prevention over reaction, stability over disruption, and long-term outcomes over short-term fixes.

By doing so, the bill helps ensure that individuals are not left without support during predictable life transitions or periods of increased vulnerability.

From the perspective of Laila's Gift, prevention is not aspirational—it is essential. When systems fail to address known risks early, the consequences can be irreversible. HB 162 recognizes that safeguarding individuals across the life cycle is both a public safety responsibility and a moral imperative.

Investing in structured, proactive supports reduces the likelihood of crisis interventions later and strengthens families, communities, and service systems overall.



HB 162 is important not only for the services it supports, but for the systems perspective it reinforces. Policies that account for the full life cycle reduce fragmentation across agencies and programs, promote consistency and accountability, and ensure that individuals do not lose access to support simply because they age out of one system or enter another.

This continuity is especially critical for children and families who rely on public systems during times of instability.

House Bill 162 represents a thoughtful and forward-looking step toward policies that truly support individuals throughout their lives. By reinforcing prevention, continuity, and system-wide responsibility, the bill helps protect individuals before harm occurs and strengthens outcomes across generations.

For these reasons, Laila's Gift respectfully urges a Favorable Report on HB 162.

Warm regards,

Shari Bailey  
Founder, CEO, Caregiver  
Laila's Gift