



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

HB 1280 – Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program – Feasibility Study
House Health Committee
March 5, 2026
FAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the House Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1280, Supporting Our Infrastructure Program - Feasibility Study. We thank Delegates Wims, Coley, Crutchfield, Kaufman, McComas, Vogel, Wolek and Young for sponsoring this important legislation.

My name is Dorinda Adams. I am a member of the Executive Council and a volunteer for AARP Maryland. AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the state, with approximately 850,000 members. We represent the interests of Maryland's over 50 population. AARP brings the lived experiences, concerns, and priorities of our members to the discussion table, ensuring that policy decisions reflect the needs of older adults.

Why AARP Maryland Supports HB 1280

HB 1280 requires the Office of the Comptroller, with assistance from the Department of Human Services, to conduct a feasibility study for establishing and operating the Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program.

HB 1280 would develop a framework demonstrating the value that family/informal caregivers provide to family, friends, and even neighbors across Maryland. The *Caregiving in the US 2025* report, published by AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving, stated that 1,164,000 individuals living in Maryland identify as a family/informal caregiver. This represents 24% of adults in the state. An AARP Research study from 2023 found that Maryland family/informal caregivers provide 710 million hours of unpaid care annually. The value of this care is \$12.8 billion. We need to consider the critical impact that family/informal caregivers provide to supplement the state's health care responsibilities. This data alone demonstrates the value that family/informal caregivers provide to Marylanders needing care, which our health care system is not adequately addressing.

Data provides the framework for an issue and a starting point for identifying strategies for successful resolution. Family/informal caregivers are a valuable resource for all, and it is time to demonstrate that Maryland is ready to invest in one of our most treasured natural resources. AARP has prioritized family caregivers as a key component of its health care agenda. Programs and policies that enable and help offset the costs of family caregiving are essential. AARP has demonstrated this priority by establishing a national pilot *Caregiving in My Community* and

Maryland is one of four states participating as the initial phase of the pilot began in the spring of 2025. The pilot has been designed to identify ways to enhance and expand existing resources within local and state governments and formal and informal organizations across the state. Maryland's participation is currently in the second phase of the three-phase pilot and is demonstrating that collaboration among public and private stakeholders could enhance and expand the support needed for our family/Informal Caregivers. A flowchart of Maryland's process is included as part of this written testimony to provide additional information.

In the first phase of the pilot, we conducted *Listening Sessions* that included both one-on-one conversations and group convenings. We heard stories not only about the financial challenges that family/informal caregivers experience, but also about how they are impacted as they manage their employment responsibilities and are often unable to pursue opportunities to advance in their careers to ensure they can meet the needs of their family member.

AARP Maryland's participation in the national pilot would support the scope of work as defined in HB 1280 and continue to build on existing research, ultimately requiring us to adopt policies and programs that ensure support for our family/informal caregivers.

Conclusion

We believe that by passing HB 1280, Maryland will lead the country in ensuring that family/informal caregivers are supported for the value that they provide in caring for a family member, friend or neighbor. Family/informal caregivers provide not only supplemental care to a loved one but also the assurance that their family member receives the very best care possible.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 1280.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick at swestrick@aarpp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.