



TESTIMONY ON HB0989 - POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS
State Assistance for the Elderly – Calculation of Income

TO: Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison; Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and members of the Health and Ways and Means Committees

FROM: Linda Bergofsky and Wayne Berman, Co-Chairs, Montgomery County Commission on Aging

We are writing on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging (CoA) in support of **HB0989—State Assistance for the Elderly – Calculation of Income**. The CoA was established by Montgomery County in 1974 pursuant to a requirement of the Federal Older Americans Act of 1965, that there be an Advisory Council to the Area Agency on Aging. In that role, the CoA serves as an advocate for the health, safety, and well-being of the County's older residents at the local, State, and National levels. This proposed bill addresses a significant concern of the CoA and its constituents, that is, maintaining the ability to age safely in one's community.

According to the Housing Initiative Partnership, "Home sharing can reduce social isolation, create monthly income for homeowners, and offer new affordable housing options for home seekers." This sensible and practical strategy is not a new one, as older adults have rented rooms and housed family members and others over time, providing access to affordable, comfortable housing that increasingly is in short supply.

HB0989 acknowledges that this rental strategy now increasingly may have a negative impact on the ability of older adults to benefit from other State credits and assistance programs designed to support their ongoing health and quality of life. Specifically, primary residence rental income can reduce the eligibility of older adults for other State tax credits, housing assistance, and medical assistance. We view HB0989 as a necessary and important intervention to prevent older people from the untoward effects of renting part of their homes.

We respectfully urge the return of a Favorable report on HB0989.