



**Testimony before the House Health Committee
April 2, 2026**

Senate Bill 809 - Supporting Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program - Feasibility Study

SUPPORT

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our support for Senate Bill 809 Support Our Caregiver Infrastructure Program – Feasibility Study.

As social workers who serve older adults, we support this bill because it would study the feasibility of establishing a framework for monthly payments to currently unpaid family members who care for older relatives and those with disabilities.

The Maryland Department of Health estimates that 976,000 Marylanders are family caregivers. They provide 710 million hours of care every year, valued at \$12.5 billion, according to a 2023 AARP study.

Family caregivers often pay a heavy price, physically, emotionally, and financially for their unpaid labor. About 80% of them pay expenses out of pocket for their loved ones, and 39% say they have experienced financial setbacks due to their caregiving roles. About a third of them leave their jobs or cut back their hours to accommodate their caregiving schedules.

Developing a system to pay family caregivers for their efforts would not only help the caregivers but would also support millions of families in our communities and prevent premature long-term-care placements.

For these reasons, we ask for your favorable report on SB 809.
Respectfully,

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