

HB0811**The Village Multigenerational Third Places Act**

Health

February 19, 2026

Favorable

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports House Bill 0811, which authorizes the Department of Aging to award grants to nonprofit organizations and area agencies on aging to support social connection for individuals participating in aging-in-place programs through events and gatherings held at multigenerational third places- community spaces that foster social connection, events, and gatherings among people of different ages.

In the next few months, Catholic Charities will complete construction on the Carolyn E. Fugett Intergenerational Center in West Baltimore. This transformative project will provide early childhood education, workforce development, youth recreation, and behavioral health and wellness services in a shared, multigenerational setting. By creating opportunities for meaningful engagement across generations, the Center will help reduce isolation, improve overall well-being, and strengthen community stability. It exemplifies the type of multigenerational “third place” envisioned by this bill.

The need for increased access to intergenerational centers and social connection opportunities for older adults has never been more urgent. Social isolation and depression among older adults have become significant public health concerns. Millions of Americans over age 65 experience loneliness, depression, or limited social interaction. According to AARP, 41% of Americans in their sixties report feeling lonely, a substantial increase over the past decade¹. Nearly one in four adults age 65 and older report not having enough close friends, and 38% say it has become more difficult to form new friendships as they age. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that loneliness and lack of social and emotional support are strongly associated with increased risks of depression and stress². Furthermore, research shows that social isolation is linked to serious health consequences, including heart disease, cognitive decline, and premature death. Beyond the human toll, social isolation also contributes to increased healthcare utilization and higher long-term costs.

Intergenerational programming offers a proven and effective solution to address these challenges. Programs that bring older adults and younger generations together improve emotional well-being, reduce loneliness, and support both mental and physical health. Meaningful social engagement helps older adults maintain independence, supports cognitive functioning, and fosters a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. These programs also benefit younger participants by providing mentorship, emotional support, and opportunities to develop stronger community ties. Multigenerational third places create environments where these connections can occur regularly and organically, strengthening individuals, families, and communities alike.

House Bill 0811 represents an important investment in the health, independence, and well-being of Maryland’s aging population. **For these reasons, Catholic Charities of Baltimore respectfully urges the Health Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 0811.**

Submitted By: Madelin Martinez on behalf of Meti T. Negassa, Catholic Charities Advocacy Fellow

¹ AARP Research, *Disconnected: The Escalating Challenge of Loneliness Among Adults 45-Plus* (Washington, DC: AARP, December 2025), <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00983.001>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Loneliness, Lack of Social and Emotional Support, and Mental Health Issues — United States, 2022,” *MMWR* 73, no. 24 (2024), <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7324a1.htm>