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HB 804 - Department of Aging - Aging Resilience Fund - Establishment
House Health Committee
February 19, 2026
FAVORABLE

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 804, which would establish an Aging Resilience Fund. My name is Sara Westrick, Advocacy Director for AARP Maryland, which represents more than 850,000 members across the state, making it one of the largest membership-based organizations advocating for older Marylanders.

HB 804 establishes a new special fund within the Maryland Department of Aging, the Aging Resilience Fund. The goal is to support the Department's mission and strengthen programs and services for older adults across the state.

Maryland's population is aging faster than many of the systems designed to support it. By 2030, one in four Marylanders will be 60-plus, placing new pressure on health care, housing, caregiving, transportation, and long-term services. HB 804 helps the state prepare for this demographic shift by providing the Maryland Department of Aging with a flexible, sustainable funding tool to strengthen programs that older adults rely on.

The Fund comprises fees collected under the Department of Aging's statutory authority, other money accepted for its benefit (e.g., grants, donations), and investment earnings. The Fund can support administrative or programmatic activities related to the Department's mission, including personnel costs, partnership development, and any programs, services, or activities within the Department.

We believe that establishing this fund could help support long-term planning and give the Department flexibility to respond to emerging needs. We note the rising demand for aging-in-place supports, growth in social isolation among older adults, and more complex caregiver situations.

The bill also allows the Fund to accept donations, grants, and other contributions. This gives the Department the opportunity to explore philanthropic partnerships and perhaps even pilot new programs before scaling statewide.

In short, HB 804 turns the Department into a more effective collaborator with nonprofits, local aging offices, and community partners and can help Maryland prepare for its rapidly aging population. If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick at swestrick@aarp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.