



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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February 11, 2020

Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of HB 498: Department of Aging – Grants for Aging-in-Place Programs – Funding

Dear Chair McIntosh,

Many of us are aware that numerous jurisdictions in Maryland, including Howard County, are experiencing exponential growth in our aging populations. Between 2000 and 2017, Howard County's population age 65 and over more than doubled, from 18,468 residents to 39,232. Additionally, our share of the population that is age 65 and over is no track to increase from 12% currently to 22% in 2040, translating into 81,755 residents.

While a majority of older adults are vibrant and healthy, it is recognized that levels of disability (both cognitive and physical) increase with advancing age. Numerous surveys indicate that the vast majority of older adults wish to remain in their communities, either in their current homes or relocating to new homes in the communities where they have lived for decades. A longtime home and place in the community is a source of memories, community connections to neighbors, friends, faith organizations and healthcare providers.

It is our belief that bills such as HB498, alongside programs like Non-Profits for our Aging Neighbors Act (NANA), are much needed strategies to proactively address the needs of the older adult community to facilitate their desire to remain safely and independently in their communities at a fraction of the cost of institutionalization.

I appreciate the advocacy of Delegates Hill, Ebersole, Feldmark, Korman, and Lierman for their strong leadership and innovative legislation to proactively address the need to establish and strengthen robust community-based solutions. These services promote independence, prevent social isolation, and avert nursing home placement for older adults desiring to remain in their communities as they age. Last year we launched Age-Friendly Howard County to join the AARP network of age-friendly states and communities, an affiliate of the World Health Organization. We remained focused on making sure that Howard County is a great place to grow older and to grow up in a "livable" community and HB498 will help in our endeavor.

My Administration, along with the Commission on Aging, is in favor of passage of this legislation and believes it is a constructive step forward by the State. I urge your support and favorable report on HB 498.

All the best,

Calvin Ball

Howard County Executive