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March 30, 2021

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Office of the Attorney General

RE: (Crossover) HB 870 Maryland General and Limited Power of Attorney Act –  
Assistance with Governmental Benefits and Programs – **Support**

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House Bill 870 seek to enact recommendations of the Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force.<sup>1</sup> One of the Task Force's primary objectives was to help Marylanders make health and life planning decisions in a manner that protects themselves, their families, and their resources.<sup>2</sup>

Consistent with the Task Force's recommendation 23, House Bill 870 repeals and reenacts with amendments the Maryland Statutory Form Limited Power of Attorney to add authority to assist the principal with the steps necessary to apply, and qualify for, public benefits. Experience with the COVID-19 pandemic teaches that authority will prove especially crucial when loved ones or family members are incapacitated due to illness.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of Attorney General urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to favorably report House Bill 870.

cc: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

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<sup>1</sup> See generally MD. ATT'Y GEN. BRIAN E. FROSH'S COVID-19 ACCESS TO JUST. TASK FORCE, CONFRONTING THE COVID-19 ACCESS TO JUSTICE CRISIS (Jan. 2021), [https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/A2JC%20Documents1/AG\\_Covid\\_A2J\\_TF\\_Report.pdf](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/A2JC%20Documents1/AG_Covid_A2J_TF_Report.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 33.