



COMMISSION ON AGING

January 18, 2021

Delegate Maggie McIntosh
Chair, Appropriations Committee
House Office Building Room 121
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Dear Delegate McIntosh,

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging COA is authorized by the Older Americans Act, P.L. 116-131, and was established by Montgomery County in 1974 to advise County government on the needs, interests and issues of Older Adult residents, and to advocate on their behalf at the local, state and national levels.

The Commission supports HB 255, Department of Aging - Grants for Aging-in-Place Programs - Funding. This bill authorizes MD Department of Aging to make grants to nonprofit organizations and Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) for aging-in-place programs including those that allow older adults the opportunity to live in a "senior village." The bill defines "senior village" as a local, member-driven, nonprofit organization that supports community members who choose to remain in their communities by fostering social connections through activities and events, and by coordinating volunteer help in the elder's home using a neighbor-helping-neighbor model.

Maryland currently has approximately 40 Villages open; thirty of those Villages are in Montgomery County. Villages supplement the efforts of the AAAs by providing assistance to our older adults, helping to reduce social isolation, a major factor contributing to poor health and additional healthcare costs. During this past year while in the throes of the COVID pandemic, Villages stepped forward to check on community members, either electronically or by phone, and provided assistance as needed in a safe manner. As nonprofits, Villages can use this additional fiscal support to enhance services to their community members, such as rides to medical appointments, friendly visits, social outlets, chores, etc.

A similar bill, HB 498, was passed by the General Assembly during the 2020 session. However, the Governor vetoed HB 498 due to the economic challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Again, COA supports HB 255, and we ask the Committee for a favorable report. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara Selter

Barbara Selter, Chair

Department of Health and Human Services

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