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March 1, 2022

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 578 State Prescription Drug Benefits--Retirees

Dear Committee Members:

Please provide a favorable vote and report on SB 578.

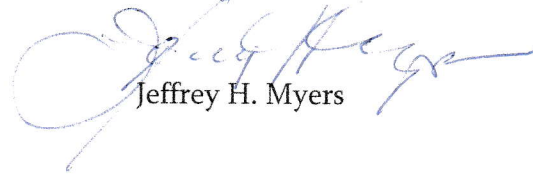
In April of 1985 I started work as an assistant attorney general for the State. Based on the experience of many friends and relatives who had retired from the State from the late 1960s up to and including 2017, it was my understanding (as well as that of a great many other people) that part of the State's retirement benefits was the State's medical insurance coverage for retirees, including pharmaceutical benefits.

As you are aware, a great number of people felt cheated when the General Assembly decided in 2018 that it did not need to honor this common understood commitment. Granted the ground shifted somewhat when the federal government adopted Medicare Part D. Yet however one views this matter, employees who had vested by 2011, should not be excluded from the State's pharmaceutical benefit program. Perhaps an even more apparent and obvious touchstone is that no State employee who was qualified for a full 30-year retirement by 2018, which is when the General Assembly decided to change the rules, should be precluded from participating in the State's long time pharmaceutical program for retirees. Note that I specify "who was qualified," not who retired. The General Assembly's actions in 2018 resulted in the State losing many capable employees who retired before the end of 2019 in order to avoid the removal of their long-understood benefit. Employees who had the 30 years to retire, but chose to stay and continue to work for the good of the citizens of Maryland should not be penalized.

Vote in favor of Senate Bill 578 to honor the work of many dedicated State employees

who put in long years of service to our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey H. Myers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeffrey H. Myers