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Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Chair

Government Operations and
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House Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Testimony of
Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg
Before the House Health and Government Operations Committee
In Support Of
House Bill 297
Facilities – Disabilities, Juveniles, Behavioral Health, and Health Care – Safety Plans

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 297 is an important measure to protect some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Last year, both houses unanimously passed Senate Bill 96, requiring that all “behavioral health program[s] establish and implement a safety plan for the safety of the individuals served.” This bill was a recognition that having a detailed and documented plan was essential to ensuring the safety of those served.

This bill ensures that those plans will be up to date and relevant. It expands that commitment to residential centers and group homes that serve juveniles and persons with disabilities.

By requiring various organizations that serve vulnerable individuals to reevaluate their safety protocols at least every five years, HB 297 holds these providers to similar standards set by OSHA,¹ DOT,² and FEMA.³ This bill will protect the safety of vulnerable individuals without imposing excessive or unreasonable administrative demands on the centers providing the services.

¹ Process Safety Management guidelines: “At least every five years after the completion of the initial process hazard analysis, the process hazard analysis must be updated and revalidated by a team meeting the standard’s requirements to ensure that the hazard analysis is consistent with the current process.” Pg. 11^[A]

² Federal Highway Administration Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSP) (23 CFR 924.9(a)(3)(i)) “States must complete an SHSP update no later than 5 years from the previous approved version.”^[B]

³ FEMA Disaster Assistance Mitigation planning 44 C.F.R §201.3(c)(3): “At a minimum, review and update the Standard State Mitigation Plan every 5 years.”^[C]

HB 297 ensures that steps are being taken to protect the most vulnerable members of our community without imposing excessive administrative burdens that could distract these agencies from their important missions. For these reasons we strongly encourage this committee to act favorably on HB 297.

February 2, 2022