



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

HB 589 Adult Protective Services - Vulnerable Adults Registry - Investigations and Records of Abuse and Neglect and Workgroup Study
FAVORABLE
House Judiciary Committee
February 17, 2022

Good Afternoon Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan. I am the Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the state, encompassing almost 850,000 members. AARP MD overwhelmingly supports **HB 589 Adult Protective Services - Vulnerable Adults Registry - Investigations and Records of Abuse and Neglect and Workgroup Study**. We thank Delegate Fisher for sponsoring this important legislation.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

HB 589 authorizes the Social Services Administration within the Department of Human Services (Department) to establish and maintain a centralized confidential database for abused and neglected vulnerable adults. It authorizes the Department or a local department of social services to identify in the database an individual responsible for abuse and neglect of a vulnerable adult after an investigation. Section two of the bill establishes a workgroup to study best practices for a Vulnerable Adult Registry.

The registry as proposed is a system for maintaining the identity of individuals who are found, only as a result of an Adult Protective Services investigation, to have an indicated finding of abuse, neglect or exploited seniors or adults (18 and older) with disabilities living in the community or in a facility. The purpose of such a registry is to make this information available to individuals, agencies or employers who are authorized to receive such information. Information about registries meeting this definition was collected via two online surveys and subsequent telephone interviews with representatives of states, as well as a review of statutory and regulatory materials.

Abusing adults, adults in a long-term care, a family member, a friend in a health facility setting that care for an adult especially a vulnerable adult affects hundreds of thousands of us every day. Adult protective services provide some safeguards but are called into investigate after the fact. We know abuse occurs without regard to race, income, education, place of residence, or living arrangements. It is such a sickening feeling when you have to leave your mother, father, grandparent or other adult that for no fault of their own are no longer able to care for themselves and is in need of care in a health facility, day care setting or have someone come into their home

to provide care. We hope, when we leave our vulnerable family member in the care of others that staff in those facilities are caring and nurturing, but there are a small few who are not and for those reasons, we need to keep track of those people.

AARP believes HB 589 is a step in the right direction to protect vulnerable adults in a health care facility. Oversight measures in these facilities must ensure that direct service workers are appropriately screened for criminal backgrounds, including a fingerprint check and review of federal and state protective service and abuse registries.

Over half the states in the United States (26) now have abuser registries for perpetrators of elder and vulnerable adult abuse.¹ It is time for Maryland to join the ranks. For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committee issue a FAVORABLE report on HB 589. For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

¹ <https://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/adult-protective-services-abuse-registry-national-report/>