

**Larry Thomas**

**Maryland General Assembly Testimony – Bill HB0731**

My name is Larry Thomas and I have been a resident of Maryland for over 35 years. For over 23 of those years, I have been a long-distance caregiver, providing care and support for family members who reside in North Carolina, including my Aunt for 9 ½ years with no family support and my 100 year old mother. My Aunt passed away at 95 in August 2014. Since March 2019 during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have spent the majority of my time in North Carolina caring for her, working remotely and finally retiring in September 2021. The plight of caregiving in America is a national epidemic. The emotional, psychological and financial toil that the stress of caregiving has had on me is unmeasurable. It is only by God's grace that I have not suffered the financial wipeout that is so typical with so many families. In November 2015, I was inspired to co-found a Caregivers Support Ministry in the church in Maryland. The stories that are shared by members of this group are horrific. Many have suffered great financial loss, including exhausting their savings and retirement accounts, losing their homes and going hungry to care for their loved ones. Please, HELP US!