



COMMISSION ON AGING

February 17, 2017

The Honorable Anne Kaiser
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 644

Dear Delegate Kaiser:

I write on behalf of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging in support of HB 644, the "Independent Living Tax Credit Act." This bill creates a credit of up to \$5,000 against State individual or corporate income tax for certain expenses incurred in the installation of features that would make a home more accessible for persons with disabilities.

The Commission on Aging has worked closely with the Montgomery County Executive and the County Council on several actions that would enable older adults to age in place. In 2015, Montgomery County accepted an invitation from the World Health Organization (WHO) and AARP (WHO's U.S. representative) to become certified as an Age-Friendly Community. An important feature of an WHO/AARP Certified Age-Friendly Community is safe and affordable housing, including options that allow residents this goal is to facilitate the installation of features that make a dwelling accessible for residents and their guests with mobility impairments.

Montgomery County has recognized the value of accessibility features with its Design for Life Montgomery Tax Incentive Program. Design for Life provides property tax credits to homeowners and contractors who incorporate accessibility features into new home construction or the renovation of existing residences. Features such as a no-step entrance or a wider bathroom doorway not only benefit the residents of a home; they also benefit visiting friends or relatives who may have mobility limitations. Accessibility features also help to prevent falls and other injuries which, particularly in an older person, can lead to hospitalization and long term care.

For the reason described above, the Montgomery County Commission on Aging supports SB 180 and its companion bill, HB 644. Tax incentives to encourage the installation of accessibility features will enhance the ability of older adults to age in place more comfortable, more conveniently, and more cost effectively. Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

Noelle Heyman, Chair
Commission on Aging

cc: Montgomery County Delegation
Leslie Frey
John J. Kenney

Department of Health and Human Services

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