



COMMISSION ON AGING

February 27, 2018

The Honorable Thomas M. Middleton
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 386

Dear Senator Middleton:

I am writing to express the Montgomery County Commission on Aging's support for SB 386, the Maryland Nursing Home Resident Protection Act of 2018.

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to investigate all complaints against nursing homes within 10 days. For any complaint alleging immediate jeopardy to a resident, MDH must make every effort to investigate within 24 hours; the complaint must be investigated within 48 hours.

'According to a 2017 report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General, in 2015, the Maryland Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) failed to investigate 648 of 867 allegations of harm at nursing homes within a federally required 10-day window. This number accounted for approximately 75% of all high-priority complaints. The report also noted that OHCQ did not meet the federal threshold in any year between 2011 and 2015. This low response time clearly sends a message to nursing home administrators that failing to treat patients appropriately is not a high priority in Maryland.

Currently, OHCQ has only 27 inspectors specially assigned to nursing homes, or 1 inspector for every 8.4 nursing homes. When one considers that there are 227 licensed nursing homes in the state of Maryland, it is little wonder that OHCQ falls behind on its inspections after high-priority complaints. HB 386 will provide funding to increase OHCQ staffing and will; therefore, go a long way towards protecting those vulnerable individuals who cannot protect themselves.

Thank you for your consideration of the Commission on Aging's letter of support for HB 386.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Schoenfeld, Chair
Commission on Aging

cc. Senator James N. Mathias, Jr.
Montgomery County Delegation

Department of Health and Human Services

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