

AARP Maryland Celebrates Successful 2026 Session

AARP Maryland: Longevity Ready Maryland, Fraud Protections, Support for Caregivers Among Wins for Older Marylanders

ANNAPOLIS, MD, UNITED STATES, April 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the 2026 Legislative Session wrapped up during Sine Die, [AARP Maryland](#) is celebrating a slate of more than 40 legislative wins for older Marylanders, including protections for vulnerable adults, support for family caregivers, simplified procedures for property transfers, improvements in long-term care oversight, and a multi-sector plan for aging.

A Maryland for All Ages

SB 113/HB278, the Longevity Ready Maryland Act codifies the state's 10-year plan to help Maryland manage its aging population by aligning state, local, nonprofit, and private partners to strengthen aging services across Maryland.

"The Longevity Ready Maryland Act aligns with AARP's mission to empower people to live their best life as they age," said AARP Maryland Advocacy Director Sara Westrick. "Age-friendly planning benefits everyone. When we design communities with safe streets, accessible housing, reliable transportation, and opportunities for connection and lifelong learning, people of all ages benefit."

HB 624/SB 411, The Safe Staffing Act of 2026 requires hospitals to establish clinical staffing committees with representation from both management and frontline staff. The committee must include workers who understand patient needs firsthand, including certified nursing



AARP Maryland volunteers gathering to lobby in Annapolis.

assistants, dietary aides, technicians, nurses, environmental services workers, and residents.

“By empowering frontline workers, Maryland ensures staffing plans are grounded in real-world patient care conditions, said Ms. Westrick. “In addition, giving employees a voice in staffing decisions improves morale and retention, which is critical to addressing the staffing challenges experienced at many Maryland hospitals.”

Long-Term Care Oversight

HB 671/SB 340: Funding for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and HB 1002/SB 493: Closing the Involuntary Discharge Loophole represent important system-level reforms. HB 671/SB 340 provides reliable and predictable funding for the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, which is critical to providing independent oversight that strengthens resident protections. HB 1002/SB 493 closes a loophole related to the involuntary discharge process by ensuring that residents must be discharged with enough notice and with a care plan in place.



AARP Maryland State Director Hank Greenberg

Ms. Westrick shares, “The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman provides an essential

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These are just a few of the many actions taken on behalf of the 50+ by AARP Maryland staff and volunteer advocates during the 2026 legislative session. We thank our bill sponsors for their support.”

*Hank Greenberg, AARP
Maryland State Director*

function, often resolving issues with a high rate of satisfaction for residents. We rely on the Office and are heartened to see this bill supporting its work.” She shares further, “Involuntary discharge is often one of the most traumatic events a nursing facility resident can experience. This bill will help protect Maryland’s most vulnerable residents at their most vulnerable time.”

[The LEAD Act](#)

The LEAD Act, comprised of five separate bills, is a comprehensive, caregiver-centered approach to addressing elopement risk across the lifespan, from early

childhood through older adulthood. Two, incorporating the needs of older Marylanders and supported by AARP Maryland, have passed and are on the way to the governor’s desk.

HB634/ SB745, Police Training - Autism and Dementia requires entrance-level and in-service

police and first responder training programs to include training regarding individuals with dementia, autism, and intellectual developmental disabilities.

HB1434, Maryland Department of Health - Caregiver Resource Webpage, requires Maryland to develop and maintain a caregiver resource webpage with information and resources to support certain family caregivers in the state.

“The LEAD Act brought together a coalition of parents, autism activists, Alzheimer’s and dementia advocates and law enforcement over a shared goal. The partners recognized that elopement, commonly called wandering, is a lifespan issue, and many of the same safeguards we establish for neurologically impaired children will also keep older individuals safe from harm,” said Ms. Westrick.

Protecting Vulnerable Adults

HB 1008/ SB 753 Vulnerable Adult Banking Protection Act allows financial institutions to temporarily delay or deny suspicious transactions. Banks and credit unions may pause a disbursement if they reasonably believe it could lead to financial exploitation.

“The Vulnerable Adult Banking Protection Act is a critically needed bill that will help stop financial exploitation before the money is lost, when intervention can still make a difference. Financial exploitation of older adults is one of the fastest-growing and most devastating forms of elder abuse,” said Ms. Westrick. “Victims caught up in scams describe being in a heightened emotional state, due to fear or excitement (depending on the scam). Putting a pause on the transaction provides an opportunity for bank personnel to intervene and help them to reflect on the situation before they are irreparably harmed.”

HB 216 / SB 140 Criminal Law – Benefits Exploitation prohibits the recruitment, harboring, transportation, or obtaining of an individual for the purpose of appropriating their government benefits through deception, coercion, exploitation, isolation, or any other means.

“This is a critical measure to prohibit the exploitation of vulnerable individuals, particularly older adults and those with disabilities,” said Ms. Westrick. “These individuals are often targeted by unscrupulous individuals who seek to exploit their trust and vulnerability for personal gain.”

Protections for Maryland Ratepayers



AARP Maryland Advocacy Director Sara Westrick

The 2026 Maryland Utility RELIEF Act, championed by Gov. Wes Moore, lowers energy bills and enhances grid reliability by imposing stricter oversight on utility companies and data centers. It provides \$100 million in ratepayer relief, caps utility profits, and requires data centers to pay for grid upgrades. AARP also successfully defended the consumer protections established in 2024's SB 1.

"The energy market is a complicated arena with many factors at play; it's not as simple as supply and demand," said AARP Advocacy Director Sara Westrick. "This year we were able to uphold the importance of SB 1's consumer protections in the retail market, and we believe this bill will bring a bit of needed relief to families facing soaring energy costs."

Simplified Transfer of Property

HB 738/SB 651 - Real Property – Transfer-on-Death Deed allows property owners to record a transfer-on-death deed that automatically transfers real property upon their death, outside of probate.

"Not all Marylanders have the financial resources to hire an attorney or develop complex estate plans. A legally recognized, easy-to-use form, paired with clear statutory protections, helps ensure that individuals of all income levels can make their wishes known and pass property to loved ones without unnecessary legal hurdles," said AARP Maryland State President Emeritus Jim Campbell in his testimony supporting the bill.

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