

Sharpener – May 2026

SLC Report

The Maryland General Assembly 2026 Session adjourned on April 14, 2026. For this session, members of the State Legislative Committee testified and/or submitted a written statement for 23 bills (some were cross-filed). Here are the bills on which we testified which passed and have been signed or will be signed by Governor Wes Moore.

HB 278 – Human Services – Department of Aging and Commission on Aging – Longevity Ready Maryland Act (Sponsor – Chair, Health Committee at request of Department of Aging)

Cross file – SB113 (Sponsor – Chair, Finance Committee by request of Department of Aging)

Maryland in January 2024 launched the Longevity Ready Maryland initiative, a comprehensive, 10-year multisector plan which aligns state, local, nonprofit, and private partners to strengthen aging services across Maryland. These bills enact the Longevity Ready Maryland Act (LMRA) and enhances the role of the Secretary of Aging, ensuring Maryland can assess needs, coordinate programs, and educate the public effectively. The LRMA modernizes and diversifies the Commission on Aging, expanding representation across a range of categories, helping ensure that decisions made by the Commission reflect the lived experiences of all Marylanders. The LMRA also builds transparency and accountability through annual reporting to the Governor and the General Assembly, keeping progress visible and ensuring that funds for aging services are used effectively. Finally, HB 278 requires regular updates to the Longevity Ready Maryland Plan to ensure it stays responsive to changing needs, research, and best practices.

HB 1008 – Fiduciary Institutions – Exploitation of Seniors and Vulnerable Adults – Protections and Required Referral (Vulnerable Adults Banking Protection Act) (Sponsor – Delegate Pam Queen – Dist. 14, Montgomery County)

Cross File – SB 753 (Sponsor Ben Kramer – Dist. 19, Montgomery County)

The Vulnerable Adults Banking Protection Act (VABPA) will be a potent weapon against financial exploitation and fraud perpetrated on seniors and vulnerable adults. It will authorize a fiduciary institution to delay or deny a disbursement from the account of a senior or vulnerable adult if it reasonably believes the transaction may be financial fraud. The fiduciary institution must then, within four business days, notify all parties listed on the bank account notice of the delay, as well as notify the local Adult Protective Services (APS) office and a local law enforcement office (LEO) or the MD State’s Attorney’s office. While current Maryland law requires financial institutions to report suspected financial exploitation of customers who are 65

or older to the local APS office, LEO or State's Attorney, the institutions could not stop the transaction. Now, under the VABPA, the fiduciary institutions will have the authority to delay or deny a financial transaction requested by a senior or vulnerable adult if there is a reasonable belief that the requested transaction could result in financial exploitation, to allow for an investigation to take place to ensure that the adult was not being coerced into making a transaction because of a criminal act.

SB 555 – Health – Dementia Services – Brain Health Program and Clinical Tool Kit (Sponsor – Senator Antonio Hayes - Dist. 40, Baltimore City)

Cross File – HB 446 (Delegate Ashanti Martinez - Dist. 22, Prince George's County)

These bills establish the Dementia Services and Brain Health Program (BHP) in the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to lead the State's public health efforts relating to brain health and dementia, including establishing and maintaining a Clinical Toolkit for dementia care. The Clinical Toolkit will provide a standard "instruction manual" for health care providers in caring for patients who are at risk for or who may have dementia, with information on risk factors for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, risk reduction strategies, including information on lifestyle interventions to reduce dementia risk; and validated assessment tools for the detection and diagnosis of cognitive impairment. The Toolkit will be especially helpful to health care providers who may not be up to speed on dementia risks and assessments if they don't specialize in this area.

SB 150 – Notification of Veteran Status – Public Profiles (Sponsor – Senator Bryan Simonaire – Dist. 31, Anne Arundel County)

Cross File – (none)

This Veterans Bill would authorize several Maryland agencies to provide the means for Veterans to indicate their Veteran status on applications to these agencies for licenses, certificates, security identification cards, etc. The bill also states that by indicating Veteran status, the Veterans will consent to being contacted by appropriate MD agencies regarding the applicant's eligibility for state and Federal Veterans benefits. This bill, very similar to several bills in the 2025 session, is designed to recognize Veterans' military service and sacrifices made for our country, and to help ensure they have the most efficient access to earned benefits they are entitled to receive.

SB 757 – Economic Development – Local Sourcing Database (Sponsor – Senator James Rosapepe – Dist. 21, Prince George's County)

Cross File – (none)

This bill requires the Department of Commerce (Commerce) to develop and maintain a searchable online database, to be known as the Maryland Local Sourcing Portal, to connect businesses in the State with local sources for tariff-impacted goods and other supplies. By December 31 each year, Commerce must report to the General Assembly on the use and effectiveness of the portal. As originally introduced, HB 757 contained language to establish that the failure to disclose that the price of a consumer good includes a tariff imposed on the consumer good (or on components of the consumer good) and the amount of the tariff is an unfair, abusive, or deceptive trade practice under the Maryland Consumer Protection Act (MCPA), subject to MCPA's civil and criminal penalty provisions. This disclosure provision was consistent with some proposed and enacted laws in other states. However, during the Committee work on this Bill, the disclosure provision was removed.

In my earlier reports, I discussed several good bills which we supported but were not enacted because they were not voted out of their respective Committees. Some of these bills would have decreased tax revenue coming into Maryland, like the senior tax credit bills or the Veterans military retirement income tax credit bills. In these days of budget deficits, bills which decrease tax revenue face an almost impossible hurdle. But other bills which did not involve tax revenue decreases also failed, e.g., the bill (HB 977) addressing actions against “claim sharks,” predatory agents who charge exorbitant unauthorized fees to Veterans who need help in the VA disability process. Sometimes these bills face unfavorable testimony from industry parties which can kill a bill, but sometimes it's simply not clear why any particular bill dies in Committee.

Finally, I want to note that our partner senior lobbying group, AARP, had a successful session. The AARP-MD Legislative Advocacy Team (of which we are a member) has a large number of subject matter experts and thus can cover a lot of bills. AARP issued a release at the end of the MGA session noting a slate of more than 40 legislative wins for older Marylanders, including protections for vulnerable adults (like the VABPA discussed above), support for family caregivers, simplified procedures for property transfers, improvements in long-term care oversight, and a multi-sector plan for aging (the LRMA discussed above.)

AARP was also involved in MD energy and utility rate legislation this session. Lawmakers approved a major energy bill in the waning hours of the legislative session Monday, the [Utility RELIEF Act](#), which “puts money in people's pocket now, while reforming the system to ensure that we have rate relief and a stronger grid down the road,” according to House Speaker Joseline Peña-Melnyk (D-Prince George's and Anne Arundel). The bill is currently expected to provide about \$150 in annual relief for the average Maryland household. But that estimate only includes one small — but controversial — piece of the bill: The temporary cuts to an energy efficiency surcharge on electric bills.

Those cuts will take effect in 2027, but ratepayers could see savings sooner, since lawmakers also pulled \$100 million out of a state fund to pay for the energy efficiency program called EmPOWER Maryland — reducing the amount that must be paid by ratepayers. The program will return to today's levels by 2036, but environmentalists have argued that the slowdown is a bad idea, since fewer investments in more efficient technologies will increase energy demand.

A host of other provisions in the bill will save consumers' tens of millions — if not hundreds of millions — at least eventually. The bill curtails costs that utilities have been passing onto ratepayers, sets new limits on utilities' requests for rate increases, forces more data centers to pay a special tariff for their electric system demands and more. It also sets up a new state funding stream for solar generation projects paired with battery storage devices.

Impoverished Marylanders are expected to save more, because lawmakers also put \$37 million toward “accelerating” a new program to cap electric rates for low-income Marylanders at 6% of their income. Because of the influx of cash, the remaining ratepayers won't have to pick up the tab for the program. That policy change could result in \$1,400 per year in savings for low-income families, according to Senate President Bill Ferguson.

Republicans in the Assembly have seized on the \$150 estimate, arguing that the bill doesn't go far enough to trim excessive bills. They've argued that lawmakers should have walked back the state's increasing renewable energy commitments, because ratepayers are paying to bolster those projects. Republicans have also said that Democrats failed to meaningfully stimulate new electric supply, which could help to reduce prices, particularly from natural gas and nuclear energy.

Regarding data centers, a controversial topic lately, the bill would require data centers to pay a special tariff for their electricity demands, but allow perks for data centers that bring zero-emissions energy along with them, including a set timeline for a permit decision from the Department of the Environment. Food and Water Watch, which has called for a data center pause in the state, argued that the idea would “roll out the welcome mat for Big Tech. Marylanders will only achieve affordable energy by pausing new data center proposals, not by passing legislation that facilitates a path for the buildout of AI facilities, transmission lines and energy stations to power them,” said Jomar Lloyd, a Maryland organizer for the nonprofit environmental group.

Bob Doyle

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Sources: Statement of Sara Westrick, AARP-Maryland on HB 278 – Human Services – Department of Aging and Commission on Aging (The Longevity Ready Maryland Act), House Health Committee Hearing, February 5, 2026,

<https://nationaltoday.com/us/md/annapolis/news/2026/04/14/aarp-maryland-celebrates-successful-2026-legislative-session-1/>,

Energy bill heads to Moore's desk on session's final day, by Christine Condon, Maryland Matters, April 14, 2026, at <https://marylandmatters.org/2026/04/14/energy-bill-passage-utility-relief-act/>