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COMMITTEE ON AGING - TESTIMONY 2/25/14

**HB 5001: AN ACT PROVIDING RENTAL COST RELIEF TO SENIORS AND DISABLED
HB 5226: AN ACT INCREASING THE PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE**

GOOD MORNING REP. SERRA, SEN. AYALA AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGING. I AM REP. CLAIRE JANOWSKI FROM THE 56TH DISTRICT OF VERNON & ROCKVILLE.

I AM PLEASED TO SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED AND RAISED BILL HB 5001, AN ACT PROVIDING RENTAL COST RELIEF TO SENIORS AND DISABLED PERSONS & WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE COMMITTEE FOR RAISING THIS BILL AS A COMMITTEE BILL TO REINSTATE THE PROGRAM BY (1) REMOVING THE PROHIBITION ON ELIGIBLE NEW ENTRANTS (2) ENDING THE PERMANENT DISQUALIFICATION OF RECIPIENTS WHO FAILED TO REAPPLY AND RESTORING THE FUNDING NEEDED TO MAKE THE PROGRAM WHOLE ONCE AGAIN.

IN MY TOWN, APPROXIMATELY 75-100 QUALIFIED PEOPLE WERE NOT ABLE TO ACCESS THIS BENEFIT LAST YEAR DUE TO THE RESTRICTIVE CHANGES. IN ALL THE CONFUSION, EVEN MANY OF THOSE WHO MET THE NEW RESTRICTIONS AND WOULD HAVE QUALIFIED DID NOT APPLY AND, AS A RESULT, BECAME PERMANENTLY DISQUALIFIED.

COMMITTEE BILL 5001 WILL FIX THAT PROBLEM AND RESTORE THE PROGRAM TO WHAT IT WAS BEFORE THE CUT – IT DOES NOT EXPAND THE PROGRAM – IT SIMPLY MAKES THE PROGRAM WHOLE ONCE AGAIN.

IT IS AN INVALUABLE PROGRAM FOR OUR SENIORS AND DISABLED AND I THANK REP. SERRA AND THIS COMMITTEE FOR THEIR SENSITIVITY TO THE ISSUE IN RAISING THE BILL TO ENSURE THAT THAT OUR SENIORS AND DISABLED ARE NOT SHORT-CHANGED.

(See other side)

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Rep. Claire Janowski

Testimony 2/25/14: HB 5001 & HB 5226 – Committee on Aging

I AM ALSO HERE TO SUPPORT HB 5226 WHICH RAISES THE PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE FOR NURSING HOME RESIDENTS TO \$72.00 MONTHLY WITH A COST OF LIVING PROVISION. THE CURRENT ALLOWANCE OF \$60. 00 IS SIMPLY NOT ENOUGH TO COVER BASIC NEEDS LIKE HAIRCUTS AND CLOTHING. IT ALSO IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO COVER UTILITY COSTS SUCH AS ROOM PHONE SERVICE THAT MANY RESIDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PAY. ALTHOUGH I PERSONALLY PROPOSED A HIGHER INCREASE IN HB 5002, I STRONGLY SUPPORT RAISED COMMITTEE BILL 5226 INCREASING THE AMOUNT TO \$72.00 WITH A YRLY COLA.

KEEPING IN MIND THAT THE PERSONAL ALLOWANCE IS 3% TO 5% OF A RESIDENT'S OWN PERSONAL INCOME WITH THE OTHER 95% TO 98% OF A RESIDENT'S PERSONAL INCOME GOING TO THE CARE FACILITY AS APPLIED INCOME, THE SMALL INCREASE IN THE PERSONAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE IS WELCOME AND NEEDED.

I URGE A FAVORABLE VOTE ON BOTH BILLS AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION IN MOVING THESE BILLS FORWARD. I LOOK FORWARD TO ANSWERING ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

Claire Janowski
State Representative
Vernon & Rockville