

Legislative Report
March, 2016
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1. Financial Exploitation. Bills are still being discussed in the House and Senate. Passage looks extremely favorable. Bills require the State Division of Social Services to report to law enforcement any financial exploitation beyond a specified dollar amount. AARP has a 2016 Legislative Priority to support legislation which strengthens laws to increase prosecution of abuse perpetrators. These bills would accomplish that.
2. Catawba Hospital. The General Assembly has rejected the Governor's request for budget funds which could lead to the closing of the hospital. Instead they requested funds to develop a state wide plan to identify the services needed to properly care for the elderly who have special needs.
3. State Pipeline Surveying Law. This law allows natural gas pipeline companies to send crews onto private property without the owner's consent as long as they give advance notice about their intent. Our two representatives (Senator Edwards and Delegate Yost) submitted bills to repeal this 2014 law. Their bills were not approved. This condition represents a very contentious condition within many of our communities. Further efforts are underway by a number of community organizations to deal with this condition.
4. Registered Nurses. AARP had a 2016 Legislative Priority to give nurses with advanced practice certification full authority to practice to the full extent of their training and skills in order to more effectively serve those in underserved areas and/or in their homes. A number of bills were submitted to accomplish this but the General Assembly rejected all of these. Some minor actions were approved but far short of satisfying the increasing needs within many of our communities.
5. State Ombudsman Program (to provide help to those in nursing homes/adult care homes) and Respite Care Program for Caregivers (to provide a small financial grant to those care givers who are taking care of the needy in their homes). AARP had 2016 Legislative Priorities to seek funds through budget amendments to continue and/or expand these programs. The General Assembly did not approve either one of these requests.
6. Local news. Blacksburg Town Council unanimously voted final blessing on development of low-income housing, completing a package of \$1.4 million of Town and Montgomery County tax incentives. In addition, the Federal government provided \$5.5 million in incentives. Planned for 11 acres in north Blacksburg, Fieldstone (Pinnacle Construction and Development of Charlottesville) is a 144-apartment complex that will be restricted to households whose income is less than 40 percent of the area's median, or to people older than 55 whose income is less than 60 percent of the area's median.