

THE LEAD ACT 2026: How-To-LEAD Guide

The purpose of this document is to walk you through how to support upcoming bills associated with The LEAD Act during the 2026 Maryland General Assembly.

If at any time you have any questions on how to submit your support, please contact us at info@lailasgift.org and we will be happy to help!

THANK YOU!



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Section 1: Table of Bill Numbers and Hearing Details

(The Below is a Guide to Help You Navigate to Appropriate Templates Listed in the Table of Contents)

ACT Element	Bill Title	House Bill Number	House Hearing Date/Time	Corresponding Senate Bill Number	Senate Hearing Date/Time
Access	Maryland Department of Health - Caregiver Resource Webpage - Establishment	HB 1434	03/10/2026 1:00 PM	TBD Templates to be posted soon!	TBD Templates to be posted soon!
	Elopement Response Devices - Insurance and Maryland Medical Assistance Program Coverage and Provision Under State Programs	HB 1117	03/13/2026 1:00 PM	TBD Templates to be posted soon!	TBD Templates to be posted soon!
Coordination	Public Schools - School Mapping Data - Radius of School Grounds	HB 1000	2/25/2026 1:00PM	TBD	TBD
	Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student Elopement - Locative Devices	HB 1182	03/10/2026 1:00 PM	TBD Templates to be posted soon!	TBD Templates to be posted soon!
Training	Police Training - Autism and Dementia (LEAD Act of 2026)	HB 634	2/24/2026 1:00PM	SB 745	2/24/2026 1:00PM

Section 2: Registering to, Signing In, and Navigating within the MGA website

Step 1: Accessing the Maryland General Assembly (MyMGA) Website

Visit The Maryland General Assembly Website using the Link:

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/>

Step 2: Setting up a free account

In the upper right hand corner of the screen, click on the “MY MGA” and click the “Register button to register for a new account. If you already have an account, click on “Sign In” to sign into your account.



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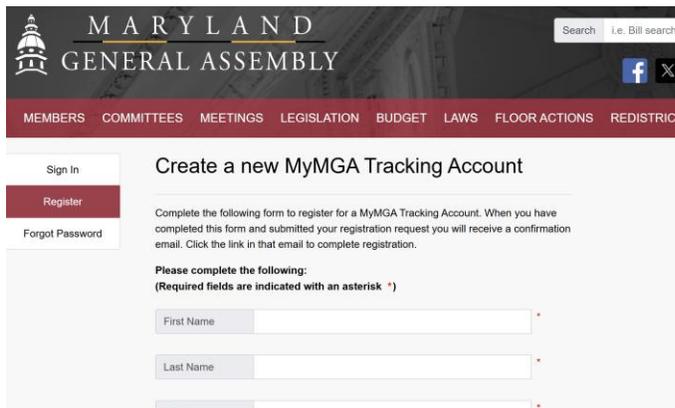
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Step 3: Completing the Registration Form

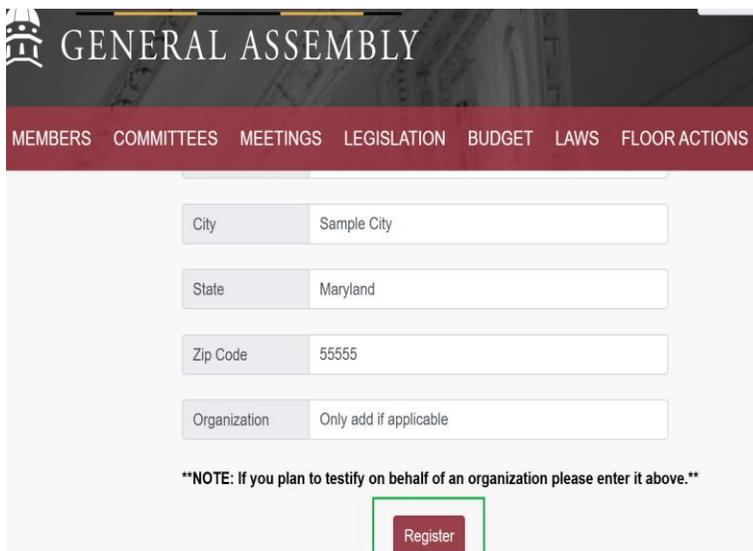
Complete the form fields on the registration page.



The screenshot shows the Maryland General Assembly website's registration page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text "MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY" and a search box. Below the navigation bar, there are links for "MEMBERS", "COMMITTEES", "MEETINGS", "LEGISLATION", "BUDGET", "LAWS", "FLOOR ACTIONS", and "REDISTRICT". On the left side, there are buttons for "Sign In", "Register", and "Forgot Password". The main content area is titled "Create a new MyMGA Tracking Account". It contains a paragraph of instructions: "Complete the following form to register for a MyMGA Tracking Account. When you have completed this form and submitted your registration request you will receive a confirmation email. Click the link in that email to complete registration." Below this, it says "Please complete the following: (Required fields are indicated with an asterisk *)". There are three input fields: "First Name", "Last Name", and "Email", each with a red asterisk to its right.

Step 4: Confirming Registration

Complete the form fields on the registration page.



The screenshot shows the Maryland General Assembly website's registration page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text "GENERAL ASSEMBLY" and a search box. Below the navigation bar, there are links for "MEMBERS", "COMMITTEES", "MEETINGS", "LEGISLATION", "BUDGET", "LAWS", and "FLOOR ACTIONS". The main content area contains four input fields: "City" with the value "Sample City", "State" with the value "Maryland", "Zip Code" with the value "55555", and "Organization" with the value "Only add if applicable". Below these fields, there is a note: "**NOTE: If you plan to testify on behalf of an organization please enter it above.**". At the bottom, there is a red "Register" button highlighted with a green border.

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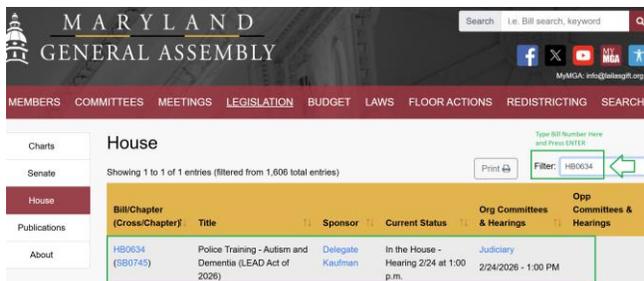
Step 5: Selecting Legislation Type

Go to the “Legislation” tab and select either “House” or “Senate” depending on the bill number you are searching for. Remember any bill numbers that start with “HB” are “House Bills” and any bill numbers that start with “SB” are “Senate Bills”.



Step 6: Finding your Bill

Let’s assume we are looking to support HB0634. Type the bill number in the search field then press the ENTER button on your keyboard. Once you hit ENTER, the bill you are searching for will show up in the results. If nothing shows up in the results, Be sure to confirm every digit in the bill number, and include “0” where appropriate: EXAMPLE: HB0634



Step 7: Accessing Hyperlink Data

You can click on any of the hyperlinks” displayed in blue text to see additional information.

Bill/Chapter (Cross/Chapter)	Title	Sponsor	Current Status	Org Committees & Hearings	Opp Committees & Hearings
HB0634 (SB0745)	Police Training - Autism and Dementia (LEAD Act of 2026)	Delegate Kaufman	In the House - Hearing 2/24 at 1:00 p.m.	Judiciary	

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Section 3: Submitting Written and/or Oral Testimony Online (General)

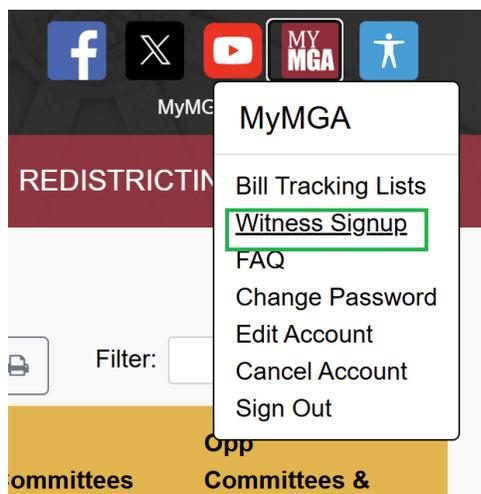
IMPORTANT: Written and Oral Testimony will be available to submit **2 business days (M-F)** in advance of the scheduled hearing date. For example, if the hearing is schedule for Tuesday February 24th, the Written and Oral Testimony will be available to submit on Friday February 20th between the hours of 8am to 6pm EST.

Step 1: Registration and Sign In

Register/Sign In using Steps 1-4 identified in the section above (Registering to, Signing In, and Navigating within the MGA website)

Step 2: Witness Sign Up

In the upper right-hand corner of the screen, location the MyMGA icon and select “Witness Signup”



Step 3: Finding the Hearing

The upcoming hearings are listed on this page. Locate the House/Senate hearing you are interested in supporting and mark your position as “FAVORABLE”

Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee - (Budget and Taxation Committee)

Monday, February 23, 2026 - 1:00 PM

<input type="checkbox"/> R30B23	Room 3, West Miller	Bowie State University	Laila's Gift	--Position--	--Testimony--	Upload File(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> R95C00	Room 3, West Miller	More City Community College	Laila's Gift	Favorable	--Testimony--	Upload File(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> R99E	Room 3, West Miller	and School for the Deaf	Laila's Gift	Unfavorable	--Testimony--	Upload File(s)

Step 4: Selecting and Uploading Your Testimony Category

On the drop down list under the “Testimony” Category you have the options to submit a written testimony, sign up to do oral testimony (in-person or virtual) or **BOTH**. Select your preference

Monday, February 23, 2026 - 1:00 PM

<input type="checkbox"/> R30B23	Room 3, West Miller	Bowie State University	Laila's Gift	--Position--	--Testimony--	Upload File(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> R95C00	Room 3, West Miller		Laila's Gift	--Position--	Written	Upload File(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> R99E	Room 3, West Miller		Laila's Gift	--Position--	Both	Upload File(s)

Step 5: Uploading Your Testimony File

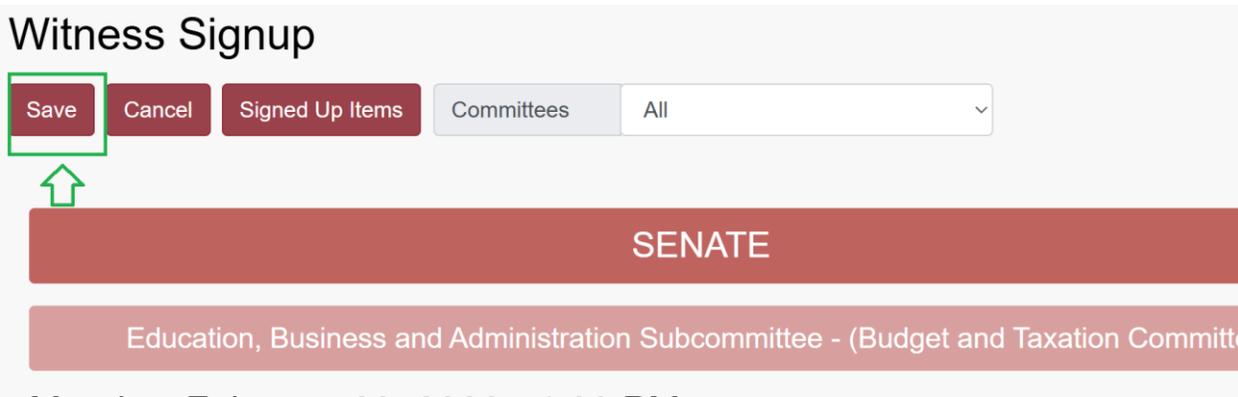
If you selected “Written” or “Both” (meaning you want to provide written and oral testimony) you’ll need to upload your written testimony. Click on the “Upload Files” button and upload the file containing your written testimony. Please refer to the samples of written testimony provided in this document to help you establish the testimony template.



The screenshot shows a web interface for uploading a testimony file. At the top, there is a dark red header with the word "SENATE" in white. Below it is a lighter red header with the text "Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee - (Budget and Taxation Committee)". The date and time "Monday, February 23, 2026 - 1:00 PM" are displayed. A green arrow points down to a grey form area. The form contains a checkbox labeled "R30B23", a text field with "Room 3, West Miller", a text field with "Bowie State University", a dropdown menu with "Laila's Gift" selected, another dropdown menu with "--Position--", and a dropdown menu with "Written" selected. A green box highlights the "Upload File(s)" button on the right side of the form.

Step 6: Saving and Confirming Changes

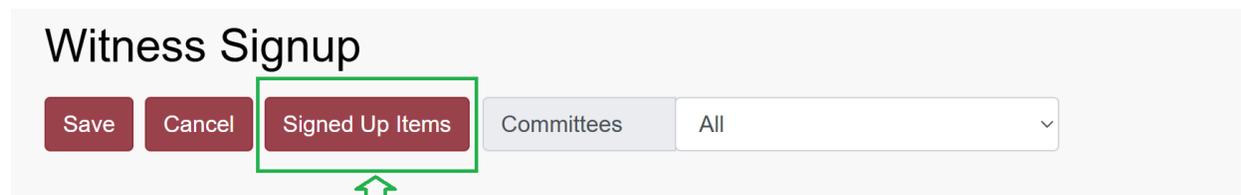
Once you have entered your position, marked your testimony category, and uploaded your file, click on the “SAVE” button on the top of the screen. You may need to scroll to the top of the page.



The screenshot shows the "Witness Signup" section of the interface. At the top, there is a "Save" button highlighted with a green box and an upward-pointing green arrow. Next to it are "Cancel" and "Signed Up Items" buttons. To the right is a "Committees" dropdown menu with "All" selected. Below this is a dark red header with "SENATE" and a lighter red header with "Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee - (Budget and Taxation Committee)".

Step 7: Checking your Sign Up Details

You can view/confirm items you have signed up for by clicking on the “Signed Up Items” button



Step 8: Saving The Date for your Oral Testimony

If you signed up for oral testimony, please be sure to secure your calendar with the day/time of the hearing.

If you are planning to testify virtually, please test all computer equipment beforehand to avoid technical difficulties during your testimony.

If you are planning to testify in-person, we recommend trying to arrive to Annapolis at least 1 hour before the hearing time to allow ample time for any scheduling interruptions.

If at any time you have any questions on how to submit your support, please contact us at info@lailasgift.org and we will be happy to help!

THANK YOU!



Section 4: Sample Written Testimony for HB 634

[ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD — IF APPLICABLE]

Date: February 24, 2026

House Judiciary Committee

Re: **House Bill 634 – Police Training - Autism and Dementia (LEAD Act of 2026)**

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee:

My name is [Name], and I am [title/role] with [organization, if applicable]. I am writing to express support for House Bill 634 and the sponsor amendment that expands training requirements to include individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism.

Organizational introduction — 2-3 sentences about who you are and whom you represent.

Example: Our organization serves Maryland residents with disabilities, families, and caregivers across the State, and we regularly work with individuals who interact with public safety systems.

OR

Individual supporting - please share 2-3 sentences about who you are and why the passage of this legislation is important to you personally.

Example: As a parent of a child with...or as the caretaker of an individual with...

House Bill 634 represents an important step forward in ensuring that Maryland's systems and personnel are better equipped to appropriately respond to individuals with complex cognitive, developmental, and medical needs. Individuals with dementia and intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, may present behaviors or communication differences that can be misunderstood without proper training. Enhanced training helps prevent misinterpretation, reduces risk of escalation, and promotes safer, more effective interactions. This not only improves safety for individuals and families but also supports professionals in performing their duties with confidence and clarity.

Many individuals in Maryland live with conditions that may affect communication, behavior, memory, or sensory processing. Without proper understanding, these differences can be

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misunderstood, which may lead to unintended consequences. Training and awareness initiatives supported by this legislation help promote safer interactions, reduce risk, and ensure that responses are appropriate to the circumstances.

Importantly, legislation like House Bill 634 supports broader goals of dignity, equity, and inclusion by recognizing that individuals have diverse needs and experiences. Ensuring that systems are prepared to respond appropriately benefits communities statewide and strengthens trust between residents and public institutions.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 634.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Name: [Full Name]

Title: [Title, if applicable]

Organization: [Organization, if applicable]

Address: [Street Address]

City, State, ZIP: [City, State ZIP]

Email: [Email Address]

Phone: [Phone Number]



Section 5: Sample Written Testimony for SB 745

[ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD — IF APPLICABLE]

Date: February 24, 2026

House Judiciary Committee

Re: **Senate Bill 745 – Police Training - Autism and Dementia (LEAD Act of 2026)**

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is [Name], and I am [title/role] with [organization, if applicable]. I am writing to express support for Senate Bill 745 and the sponsor amendment that expands training requirements to include individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism.

Organizational introduction — 2-3 sentences about who you are and whom you represent.

Example: Our organization serves Maryland residents with disabilities, families, and caregivers across the State, and we regularly work with individuals who interact with public safety systems.

OR

Individual supporting - please share 2-3 sentences about who you are and why the passage of this legislation is important to you personally.

Example: As a parent of a child with...or as the caretaker of an individual with...

Senate Bill 745 represents an important step forward in ensuring that Maryland's systems and personnel are better equipped to appropriately respond to individuals with complex cognitive, developmental, and medical needs. Individuals with dementia and intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, may present behaviors or communication differences that can be misunderstood without proper training. Enhanced training helps prevent misinterpretation, reduces risk of escalation, and promotes safer, more effective interactions. This not only improves safety for individuals and families but also supports professionals in performing their duties with confidence and clarity.

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Many individuals in Maryland live with conditions that may affect communication, behavior, memory, or sensory processing. Without proper understanding, these differences can be misunderstood, which may lead to unintended consequences. Training and awareness initiatives supported by this legislation help promote safer interactions, reduce risk, and ensure that responses are appropriate to the circumstances.

Importantly, legislation like Senate Bill 745 supports broader goals of dignity, equity, and inclusion by recognizing that individuals have diverse needs and experiences. Ensuring that systems are prepared to respond appropriately benefits communities statewide and strengthens trust between residents and public institutions.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 745.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Name: [Full Name]

Title: [Title, if applicable]

Organization: [Organization, if applicable]

Address: [Street Address]

City, State, ZIP: [City, State ZIP]

Email: [Email Address]

Phone: [Phone Number]

Section 6: The LEAD Act 2026 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the LEAD Act?

The LEAD Act is proposed legislation designed to strengthen elopement prevention and response across the lifespan. A package of multiple bills, it creates a coordinated framework that improves access to safety resources, standardizes emergency response, and expands training for caregivers, care settings, and first responders.

2. What does “LEAD” stand for?

LEAD stands for **Laila’s Elopement Awareness and Dissemination Act**. The Act, and its related bills, is built on three core pillars—**Access, Coordination, and Training**—which together form a framework that strengthens safety strategies while respecting individual independence and dignity.

3. What is Elopement, and why is it a concern?

Elopement refers to wandering or leaving a supervised, safe environment without awareness of danger. It is a significant safety risk for individuals with developmental disabilities, cognitive impairments, and dementia, and can result in serious injury or death if not addressed quickly.

4. Who does The LEAD Act protect?

The LEAD Act supports individuals across the lifespan, including children with autism and other developmental disabilities, adults with cognitive conditions, and older adults living with dementia. It also supports the caregivers and professionals who provide care, supervision, and safety support.

5. Why is The LEAD Act especially important now?

As the population ages and diagnoses of intellectual and cognitive conditions increase, elopement incidents are becoming more common. The LEAD Act shifts systems from reactive crisis response to proactive planning and prevention.

6. How does The LEAD Act support caregivers?

The LEAD Act recognizes caregivers as essential partners. It improves access to resources and education, reduces isolation, and ensures caregivers are not navigating safety risks alone during emergencies.

7. How does The LEAD Act improve emergency response?

The LEAD Act promotes coordinated and standardized emergency response plans so first responders, care settings, and families are aligned. This improves response times, communication, and outcomes during elopement incidents.

8. What role does training play in The LEAD Act?

Training is a core component. The Act expands and strengthens education for first responders and other public safety professionals so they understand elopement risks, cognitive conditions, and effective response strategies across the lifespan.

9. How are autism, dementia and hidden disabilities connected to elopement risk?

Elopement is a risk for individuals with autism, those living with dementia, and other forms of hidden disabilities. In autism, elopement may occur due to sensory sensitivities, anxiety, or difficulty recognizing danger. In dementia, memory loss and disorientation can lead individuals to wander, often without awareness of their surroundings or personal safety.

10. How does The LEAD Act address dignity and independence?

The LEAD Act balances safety with dignity by focusing on respectful, person-centered approaches. It avoids one-size-fits-all solutions and promotes supports that maintain autonomy while reducing risk.

11. How does The LEAD Act benefit first responders?

First responders benefit from clearer protocols, enhanced training across the lifespan, and improved coordination with caregivers and care settings. This reduces uncertainty in high-stress situations and supports safer, faster responses.

12. Does The LEAD Act replace existing programs?

No. The LEAD Act is designed to strengthen and align existing efforts, not replace them. It builds consistency across programs and helps fill opportunities to recognize Elopement as a lifespan risk.

13. Why is a lifespan approach important?

Elopement risk does not end at childhood or begin only in old age. A lifespan approach ensures continuity, shared learning, and consistent safety strategies as individuals' needs evolve over time.

14. How does The LEAD Act impact communities and public systems?

Communities benefit from better preparedness, enhanced system coordination, and stronger caregiver support. Public systems gain clarity, efficiency, and improved outcomes through aligned response strategies.

15. How can I get involved to support the advancement of The LEAD Act?

Here are several meaningful ways to get involved:

- **Contact your legislators**

Fill out our short online form to reach out to your State Senator and Delegates to let them know you support The LEAD Act.

- **Share information and your story**

Talking with family, friends, and local organizations about The LEAD Act helps raise awareness and amplify impact. You can also share your personal story through the Laila's Gift website to help lawmakers and the public better understand why this legislation is so important.

- **Provide testimony**

When The LEAD Act is scheduled for committee hearings, you can submit written or oral testimony explaining why this legislation matters to you. Testimony plays a critical role in helping lawmakers understand the real-world impact of the bill and the level of public support behind it. We have developed a toolkit to walk you through this process step-by-step.

- **Attend hearings and meetings**

You can watch or attend committee hearings and public meetings when The LEAD Act is being discussed. Many hearings are streamed online, and participation helps demonstrate strong community and grassroots engagement.

- **Join the Laila's Gift advocacy network**

By joining the advocacy network at Laila's Gift, you can stay informed about legislative updates, hearings, advocacy opportunities, and related events connected to The LEAD Act.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!