



BDS Healthy Aging Networks, Inc.
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July 17, 2023

Vice President/City Councilwoman Sharon Middleton and Councilman Zeke Cohen
Council President Nick Mosby and Baltimore City Council

Dear Honorable Sharon Middleton, Honorable Zeke Cohen, Honorable Nick Mosby & Honorable
City Council Members:

I am Betsy D. Simon, M.S., CHES®, national health education specialist, community activist & citizen of Baltimore since 1957. I am a fulltime volunteer working directly with older adults, caregivers and other underserved citizens in Baltimore City for decades. Currently, I am CEO and Founder of the BDS Healthy Aging Networks, Inc. and was the Founding Director of Z-HAP (Zeta Healthy Aging Partnerships) 2009 -2020.

Today, I am also representing the members of BDS Healthy Aging Networks, who strongly support [22-0254](#) Office of Aging - Independent Agency. We appreciate the untiring efforts that you put forth to lead and garner the support necessary to bring "the Office of Aging - Independent Agency" this close to reality.

The BDS Healthy Aging Networks, Inc. (BDS Networks®). a 501(c)(3) nonprofit consist of intergenerational members who share our mission to engage, educate, motivate and empower older adults, caregivers and community stakeholders to be active partners in the creation and utilization of resources and services that ensure health equity and social justice for all.

Therefore, we stand ready to assist directly in all ways needed. We can solicit the involvement of residents in need of services, those willing to serve and support as well as community and resource partners. We have been actively involved in programming, resource connections and partner access activities for older adults and citywide underserved residents. Currently we connect with these populations weekly via zoom and through in person activities. We send messages and resource lists out weekly, shared with several thousand people. We have about 500 resource partners assisting us as needed weekly and are ready to assist the Office of Aging.

We applaud you, the City Council, Mayor Brandon Scott and Deputy Commissioner Division of Aging, Heang Tan for acknowledging older adults as true assets to our great City. We are encouraged by your public declaration of this needed agency coupled with the Mayor's message to Taxpayers proclaiming budget support for ..." the creation of a framework to establish a standalone office to serve the needs of older adults."

Your work and perseverance will have a significant impact on the lives of older adults and those with linkages to older adults. Our efforts must include all Baltimore City residents if we are going to make a true difference.

We strongly endorse the new Office of Aging as a major step toward a more inclusive Baltimore City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy D. Simon".

Betsy D. Simon, M.S., CHES®, CEO and Founder
BDS Healthy Aging Networks, Inc.
"Older Adults are ASSETS Not Burdens" (2009, bds)