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LIEUTENANT
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May 28, 2024

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

I am filing for your consideration An Act to rename the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to the Executive Office of Aging and Independence.

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) was established more than 50 years ago and was one of the nation’s first agencies responsible for addressing the needs of older people.

Today, the agency manages programs and services that are available to 1.7 million older adults and their family caregivers and supports an extensive aging services network. These programs and services provide supports to help people age in the community of their choice, most often in their home or other community-based setting.

The agency strives to be the trusted, first point of contact for older adults and their caregivers. However, research has shown the growing older population does not identify with the term “elder.” Modernizing the agency’s name reduces negative images about aging, normalizes aging as a natural process and emphasizes that older people value independence and self-determination.

This legislation changes the name of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, to the Executive Office of Aging and Independence. In addition, the legislation replaces “elder,” “elderly person(s),” and “senior citizen(s)” with “older adult(s),” replaces references to “handicapped” and “disabled” with “adult with a disability,” and incorporates gender neutral language.

The new name will increase awareness of services for all older residents of the Commonwealth and confirm the agency’s mission: “together, we support aging adults to live and thrive safely and independently – how and where they want.”

For the reasons stated above, I urge your favorable consideration and prompt enactment of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,
Maura T. Healey,
Governor