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OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL**

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**Bill No.:** House Bill 744 – Senior Call Check In Program

**Committee:** Finance

**Sponsor:** Delegates Kramer et al.

**Date:** March 29, 2016

**Position:** Informational

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House Bill 744 would allow the Department of Information Technology (DoIT), in consultation with the Department of Aging, to establish, administer and adopt regulations necessary to provide a Senior Call Check –in service to residents of the State who are at least 65 years old. The service would be funded by a surcharge to be paid by subscribers to communications services to the Universal Service Trust Fund.<sup>1</sup>

A number of private companies provide similar services for a monthly fee to customers. OPC believes that several jurisdictions operate voluntary call check-in services for senior citizens in their areas. The Office of People's Counsel (OPC) understands that this Bill is targeted to assist an older population who may live alone and be medically or otherwise vulnerable, and who may not have the means to subscribe to a paid service or live in an area with a voluntary service. In that respect, the Bill has a laudable goal.

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<sup>1</sup> Before the Bill was amended in the House, the service would have been funded in much the same fashion except that the Public Service Commission would have been authorized to increase the Universal Service Trust Fund surcharge by an additional 3 cents per month if it was necessary to fund the cost of the program.