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House Bill 5416 as introduced  
First Analysis (6-5-90)

Sponsor: Rep. Richard A. Young  
Committee: Urban Affairs

**THE APPARENT PROBLEM:**

Public Act 357 of 1984 created an older persons' shared housing program, administered by the Office of Services to the Aging. The program provides funding and technical assistance to local projects that help match people who wish to share housing. The program is targeted toward senior citizens who wish to stay in their own homes but may need some assistance with housekeeping, companionship, or the extra income derived from renting some of their living space to a roommate.

The act creating the shared housing program became effective March 29, 1985, and was scheduled to "sunset" three years later. However, the act's sunset provision was declared defective and severable from the rest of the act in a 1987 attorney general opinion. This was just one of numerous sunsets or expiration dates found unconstitutional by the attorney general on the grounds that the bills containing them had not specifically mentioned the sunsets or expirations in their titles. Although many people, relying on the attorney general's opinion, assumed that these acts were still in force, at least one recent circuit court decision has cast doubt on that assumption. Advocates of the senior citizen shared housing program argue that the program has proven its worth and seek to repeal the sunset provision.

**THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:**

The bill would amend the Older Michiganians Act to eliminate the expiration provision for the older persons' shared housing program, and to repeal a section requiring the Office of Services to the Aging to report on the program to the legislature within two years after the act's effective date.

MCL 400.586a and 400.486b

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:**

According to the Offices of Services to the Aging, the legislature has appropriated \$87,000 per year for the shared housing program each year since the program's inception. (5-31-90)

**ARGUMENTS:**

**For:**

Senior citizen advocates say that home sharing is one way to extend the time senior citizens are able to stay in their own homes, helping them to avoid institutionalization and maintain some measure of independence while gaining some help with the practical problems of living alone. The typical client is a 70 year old woman, living alone, with an income below \$10,000. Those who seek housing to share are typically college students, or middle aged single women who may be displaced homemakers. Shared housing is primarily a transitional living arrangement for both parties, rather than a permanent situation, but it can

be of great benefit to both. However, it is not always easy for people who would benefit from sharing housing to find either the right partners or the right housing. At a relatively modest cost, the state program funds local services in Detroit, Oakland and Livingston Counties, Wayne County, Washtenaw County, the Lansing area, and the Upper Peninsula that help make matches between senior citizens who offer living space and people who seek housing, and provide referrals to other types of housing options. In addition, the program provides technical assistance to projects in Macomb, Monroe and Kent counties and the city of Battle Creek.

**POSITIONS:**

The Office of Services to the Aging supports the bill (5-31-90)

The Department of Social Services supports the bill. (3-22-90)