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**SB83: State Government - Delivery of Notices and Communications by Electronic Means
- Authorized**

**January 21, 2020
EHEA Committee**

Letter of Information

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. **We submit this letter of information detailing concerns with the bill as written and provide suggestions for protections to be added for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.**

The importance of information accessibility to enable people with disabilities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms is acknowledged by disability rights advocates including The Arc.

Many people with intellectual disabilities face barriers to accessing electronic communication, such as using email, the internet and mobile phones. A portion of the population of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities relies on some sort of Assistive Technology to access electronic documents, emails and Web pages. If electronic documents are not created with accessibility issues in mind, they become very difficult if not impossible to read or navigate for people.

Email industry experts acknowledge that spam filtering, blacklisting, and other deliverability issues prevent the delivery of up to 20% of all legitimate emails. This includes time-sensitive account notification emails.

Given these factors, The Arc Maryland has concerns that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities may be unable to access important documents that are sent electronically, even when they provide written permission that documents may be sent electronically.

We therefore urge the legislature to include protections for people with disabilities which may include but are not limited to assurances that any approval granted by an individual with intellectual or developmental disabilities to departments to utilize electronic methods to send important information does not include approval to send electronic communications that require that a person to affirmatively respond to remain on a waitlist for disability services and/or benefits, or respond by a certain time to access or continue to access needed services.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ande Kolp', written in a cursive style.

Ande Kolp
Executive Director
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