



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: Senate Bill 158 - Lodging Establishments - Accessible Rooms for Individuals With Disabilities - Bed Height

SPONSOR: Senator Cassilly

HEARING DATE: February 5, 2020

COMMITTEE: Finance

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 158 - Lodging Establishments - Accessible Rooms for Individuals With Disabilities - Bed Height**, which requires lodging establishments (inns, hotels, motels, and other establishments that have at least four rooms available for a fee to transient guests for lodging or sleeping purposes) to furnish each accessible room with beds of a certain height. Specifically, this Bill defines the certain height as 20-23 inches high from the floor to the top of the mattress and a 7-inch vertical clearance under the bed for lift access.

The Prince George's County Human Relations Commission (HRC) is the County's civil and human rights education and enforcement agency. The agency investigates complaints of discrimination in six areas including public accommodations, specifically inns, hotels, motels, or other establishments that provide lodging to transient persons. The HRC maintains jurisdiction to investigate claims of disability discrimination under the Subtitle 2, Division 12 of the Prince George's County Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA). Under the ADAAA, hotels are required to fulfill requests for reasonable accommodations that do not place undue burdens on the specific establishment.

There are currently 3.6 million individuals in the United States are wheelchair bound.¹ In Maryland, an estimated 11.4% of adults report at least one mobility disability.² According to the ADAAA, the size of each lodging establishment

¹ Brault, Matthew, Americans with Disabilities: 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2012/demo/p70-131.pdf>.

² BRFSS Brief: Disability and Health Among Maryland Adults (Maryland Department of Health, 2018), https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ccdpc/Reports/Documents/MD-BRFSS/BRFSS_BRIEF_2018-08_Disability.pdf

(measured by number of guest rooms) must provide a certain number of mobility accessible rooms to accommodate persons with disabilities. For instance, lodging establishments with 26-50 guest rooms require two mobility accessible rooms. Identifying this standard is important to emphasize the need for a law that requires lodging establishments to be proactive in accommodating persons with mobility disabilities.

Though the ADA does not dictate a standard for the height of accessible beds in lodging establishment rooms, such establishments are still required to provide reasonable accommodations for guests, including moving bed frames or box springs to lower bed heights or placing the frame on bed risers to increase bed heights. Accordingly, this Bill eliminates the need of lodging establishment patrons to request accommodations for a specific bed height by automatically furnishing beds in accessible rooms with a standard floor-to-mattress top height and a specified vertical clearance under the bed for lift access.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 158** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.