

Good Afternoon members of the Health and Government Operations Committee - thank you for your time today. I am here today testifying in favor of House Bill10. My name is Liz Burrage and I work for The Arc of Howard County. As part of my job, I am tasked with finding different ways to facilitate opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the community. I also have a degree in Civil Engineering and experience working for a large general contractor and have over 5 years of experience with new construction and renovation projects.

For almost 60 years, The Arc of Howard County has been a champion for people with developmental disabilities. As a disability provider, we are state and federally mandated to assist people to become integrated into their communities; this means they must spend a large portion of their time outside of our facilities. We are unable to fulfill our mission when we need bring someone back to our facility to be changed or we have to be creative in a bathroom facility utilizing floor space.

One might think there are handicap stalls to use, but the majority of handicap stalls are designed for one person in a wheelchair who can bear weight and independently pivot from chair to commode. These stalls are not designed for multiple people, nor do they provide ample space to be changed on the floor. Most stalls do not fit larger sized wheel chairs (pictured in my written testimony) and therefore the doors cannot be closed and individuals are exposed to the public. Included in my written testimony are personal testimonies from three families that could not be here today, all of whom have children with physical disabilities who need this public accommodation.

I am part of a team currently working to install changing tables in public spaces in Howard County. I have researched costs and feasibility to install these tables. For your consideration, I have included quotes for four different tables. Costs could range from a low tech table of \$800 to \$6,200 for a high tech table. The beauty of this bill is that the type of table to be installed is not prescribed and the table selected can be one that best fits the space and public building.

While I am here to speak about the needs of adults with disabilities in the community, the passing of this bill will have an impact on all people of every community in Maryland, of all demographics, and all ages. This would benefit the elderly, people with spinal injuries, post-surgery recovery, as well as people with disabilities.

Life is short, imagine you are in an accident, or have a stroke, and need assistance using the facilities. Would you be okay with being changed on a public bathroom floor?

We as the state of Maryland can and must do better. I encourage you to support HB10 so that all Marylanders have access to equitable facilities.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Burrage

Representatives,

WE URGE YOU TO VOTE IN SUPPORT OF HB10 - Public Buildings – Changing Facilities for Adult Diapers!!!!

This bill will address the lack of public facilities currently available to many people in our community. Everyone needs to have and deserves a dignified and sanitary space in which to address their bathroom needs! As parents of a severely disabled adult son, we are saddened and frustrated by the lack of public facilities available to ensure that our son can have his basic toileting needs addressed – a need that the rest of us take for granted. In an era in which programs for the disabled require that that population to be out in the community on a daily basis, either employed or otherwise engaged in meaningful day activities, the absence of adequate toileting alternatives creates a conundrum. While he must be out in the community, there is NO PLACE for him to be toileted or to have his adult diaper changed. I have listened with horror to accounts of people having their diapers changed on public restroom floors. I can think of few things more unsanitary and undignified!

Passage of this bill will help to ensure that people will not be forced with the choice of being sequestered at home or being out in the community. This bill will benefit not only our disabled children but also our disabled VETERANS and the elderly and simply anyone who is constrained by mobility issues. The social costs of NOT providing these facilities far outweighs fiscal concerns which can easily be addressed by a combination of funding pools, including grant monies awarded in support of this initiative. PLEASE HEAR US AND PLEASE VOTE IN FAVOR OF HB10!!!!

Sincerely,
Lisa Suggs

Willis, Jeanean (HRSA) <JWillis@hrsa.gov>

My daughter, Dominique, is 21 years old and will be transitioning into adult day services in July. One of the barriers to participation for some programs is the lack of suitable accommodations to change her in public. Changing in a public bathroom that barely has enough space for one per, let alone two, is a very difficult task and does not allow for proper cleaning. In addition, the potential for my daughter and/or the caregiver to slip and fall is great. I know, because it has happened. Public bathrooms with adult size changing tables would be a great benefit to adults that need a safe and dignified place to address their needs.

I greatly appreciate your assistance on this important issue.

Thank you!

Jeanean

CAPT Jeanean Willis Marsh, DPM

Chief Professional Officer, Health Services Category

United States Public Health Service

HB10- SUPPORT

Dear Honorable Representatives,

I am a proud parent of an adult with a developmental disability (DD) who is physically and mentally challenged. She is funded community services through the (Maryland) DDA. As you are aware of the CMS Community Settings rule, the services DDA provides will be mandated to be community based. Unfortunately, this is putting the cart before the horse because there aren't ANY adult size changing tables in our Howard County community that are available in common community settings such as the mall or theaters to facilitate such a mandate. As a result, my daughter has limited choices- go all the way back home or sit in a soiled diaper. There have also been instances of some parents changing their loved ones in the back of their van, but in order to do so, the lift gate needed to be open and therefore they are exposed to the public. This is so unfair to put someone in such an undignified situation.

Please support the bill to mandate adult sized changing tables in Maryland. Please support HB10.

Thank you for your time and attention to my very important email.

Colette Jackson
Proud Mom of Regina