

MICHELE GUYTON
Legislative District 42B
Baltimore County

Ways and Means Committee
Early Childhood Subcommittee
Education Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 30, 2022

HB662-Autism Coordinator Revisions - FAVORABLE

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing to request a favorable report on HB662 which makes a few simple changes to the State Coordinator of Autism Strategy and Stakeholder's Advisory Group that was established with the passage of HB847 in 2020.

The Autism Coordinator position has recently been filled and the Stakeholder group met for the first time just last month.

HB662 is necessary due to the movement of this position to the Governor's Coordinating Offices and observation of the initial implementation of the original bill. HB662 is similar, but not identical, to the Departmental Bill (SB169) already heard in the Senate Finance Committee. I respectfully request a favorable report on HB662 RATHER than the competing SB169.

Similarities - HB662 adds the Autism Coordinator to the Interagency Disabilities Board, adds Members of the House and Senate to the stakeholder's advisory group, and moves the responsibility of staffing the stakeholder group to the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives from the Department of Disabilities where it is no longer housed.

Differences - HB662 retains the Coordinator as Chair of the Advisory Group as required by HB847 and requires the Coordinator to be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate in order to elevate this position and provide legislative oversight to ensure that the most qualified applicants serve in this position. The amendments I have introduced includes the requirement to consider geographical diversity of the state during the appointments process and a clarifying amendment that the Coordinator can add members to the advisory group as considered necessary. In addition this amendment requires funding of a full-time administrative assistant for this office. Thank you for your consideration of HB662.

Sincerely,

Delegate Michele Guyton, District 42B

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delegate Michele Guyton".