



TESTIMONY FOR SB0868
Developmental Disabilities Administration – Self-Directed Services (Self-Direction Act of 2022)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lee

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0868 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

There are groups of people in Maryland who are not truly in control of their own lives. For anyone who is not able to control their own independence, we have facilities and personnel who do that for them. But, even with the best intentions in the world (which some have and others do not), we cannot adequately determine what is best for another person. This is especially true for those individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities.

The goal for those individuals should always be to allow them to become independent members of society. The more choices that they are able to make, and the more control they have over their own lives, the more integrated they can be in society. This bill attempts to bring back to the Self-direction waiver the goal of independence.

Self-direction allows individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities choice and control over their Medicaid waiver services, including choosing the staff that support them (employer authority) and deciding how their budget will be spent (budget authority) so that they can tailor their daily activities to meet their own needs and interests, rather than receiving services from an agency which determines their schedules and activities. Since 2005 when Maryland instituted its first Self-direction waiver, individual choice, control, and flexibility have been whittled down. This bill seeks to reinstate the lost equity and flexibility in Self Direction and to ensure that all people are eligible for self-direction with supports if needed. For example, it requires better training for case managers, reinstates self-directed overnight supports (which have been taken away), and removes competency requirements in favor of team support.

Our members believe that everyone should be able to control their own lives – not have them controlled by others. We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

