



## MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

### House Appropriations Committee

March 29, 2023

### SB551: Department of Service and Civic Innovation and Maryland Corps Program Service Year Option Pathways - Establishment

Position: Support



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The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As such, the DD Coalition supports the Serving Every Region Through Vocation Exploration Act of 2023. With the amendments, it will make sure all students with disabilities, including students with significant support needs, have the option to participate.

People with disabilities will benefit from this Program. It gives youth and young adults with and without disabilities the opportunity to provide services to organizations that support people with disabilities, and also gives youth and young adults with disabilities the opportunity to serve others. It is particularly important to focus on the skills and abilities of youth and young adults with disabilities.

- **Only 50.6% of Marylanders with disabilities participate in the workforce.**

**That percentage decreases significantly for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities.**

Students who exit high school at age 21 with a Certificate of High School Completion are often students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who transition to long-term services and supports through the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). DDA funds services and supports to make sure people live the lives they want. This includes working and having meaningful days when not working. A service year could allow young adults who receive supports from the DDA explore, develop, and demonstrate skills that lead to employment.

We appreciate that the Senate included language to make sure those students are eligible for that opportunity, by making it clear that all students can participate in the Program with the support they need to do so by including people who have obtained a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion on page 19, lines 14-15.

In addition, we appreciate the recognition that all people who participate in the Maryland Corps Program may need workplace accommodations and the requirement that the regulations to be adopted include “reasonable workplace accommodations for Corps participants with disabilities.”

We appreciate the focus on the importance of service and intention to be inclusive of all Marylanders. We wholeheartedly believe the Serving Every Region Through Vocation Exploration Act of 2023 benefits people with developmental disabilities in multiple ways.

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