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**SB 168 Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council – Establishment  
Senate Finance Committee  
FAVORABLE  
February 7, 2023**

Good afternoon Chair Griffith and members of the Senate Finance Committee. On behalf of our almost 900,000 members, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of SB 168 Maryland Development Disabilities Council--Establishment. We thank Chair Guzzone for introducing SB 168.

HB168 establishes the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council as an independent unit of State government with the authority to conduct and support advocacy, systems change, and capacity-building efforts to promote inclusive communities and equity in services for individuals with disabilities.

The Development Disabilities Council's role is to strengthen the voice of people with developmental disabilities and their families in Maryland. The Council supports greater independence, inclusion, empowerment and the pursuit of life as they choose. They strive to create change that eliminates discrimination and removes barriers to full inclusion. The Council will have direct contact with individuals with development disabilities, families, and caregivers. They provide a venue for policymakers and agencies to listen to people with development disabilities and their families. They perform comprehensive reviews and analyses of needs, services and supports. They develop and implement state plans every five years to respond to needs and leverage funding to make investments towards greater impact.

For these reasons, AARP MD ask for a favorable report on SB 168 to codify the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council as an independent unit of state government. If you have questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling 410-302-8451.

