



SB 168: Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council – Establishment

Written Testimony of Mary Manzoni, CEO, Maryland Works

Presented to the Senate Finance Committee

February 6, 2023

Position: Support

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Mary Manzoni. I serve as CEO of Maryland Works, an advocacy organization that expands employment and business ownership opportunities for individuals with disabilities and other barriers. I am writing today in support of SB 168. The Maryland State Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities was established by Governor Marvin Mandel's Executive Order in 1971 to carry out provisions of the federal Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Act of 1970 (PL 91-517) and Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 1975 (PL 94-10). Those previous acts are now the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (PL 106-402). Additionally, the Maryland State Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities is now known as the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council.

Your support of SB 168 would:

1. **Establish the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council as an independent unit of state government.** Currently, the Council is a program of the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD). The Council and MDOD agree that this restructuring is necessary for the reasons outlined below.
2. **Update an outdated Executive Order and codify the Council's authority in state law.** In 1971, the governor formally established the Council by executive order to carry out the



functions outlined in the DD Act. That executive order was updated in 1987 but has not been updated since.

3. **Outline other requirements that mirror the federal law.**
4. **Codify that a state entity may not interfere with the Council's work, budget, personnel, or state plan development or implementation.** This aligns with the requirement of the DD Act and allows the Council to continue their advocacy, capacity building, and systems change efforts.

Reasons this legislation is important:

1. It updates language, aligns with federal law to be current and consistent, moves the Council out of the Department of Disabilities, and codifies current operations.
2. Moving the Council from under the structure of MDOD better aligns with the spirit and intent of the DD Act.

On behalf of our entire organization, we thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony and urge your favorable report on SB 168.

Very respectfully,
Mary Manzoni

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mary Manzoni'.

Chief Executive Officer
Maryland Works