

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

RE: **SB0362/HB0352**

Please remove from this bill any reference to ARTICLE-HEALTH-GENERAL SECTION 7-101 and SECTION 7-409. Leave all the provisions of the Self Direction Act of 2022 (The Act) intact.

My name is Melissa Silverman. I am 41 years old, and I have Down syndrome. I have been on the self-directed waiver since 2007.

The changes proposed in the above referenced bill reverses a major provision of the Self Direction Act of 2022. This would allow the DDA to establish an arbitrary limit on Individual and Family Directed Goods and Services (IFDGS).

This cap will have a detrimental effect on my independence, community inclusion, health, and safety.

I have been a teacher assistant for the past 19 years. Presently, I work at Franklin Elementary School in Reisterstown in the before and after childcare program. I decided, along with my team, that it is important for me to maintain good health and be physically fit. I exercise 6 days a week. I go to the gym and take Bootcamp and BARRE+Recovery. I am the only person with a disability in these classes. I also practice swimming at the gym for the Special Olympics summer games at Towson University.

IFDGS is part of my approved plan and budget based on my needs to stay healthy and fit to do my job. Since the changes to waiver resulting from the Act became effective July 1, 2023, I have been able to access the funds from my DDA approved budget to reach the outcomes and goals in my person-centered plan which includes membership to my gym.

Don't leave me behind!

Thank you,



Melissa

