

Written Testimony
HB0352

Unfavorable

Karen Bowers LCSW-C
Thursday February 29, 2024

My name is Karen Bowers. I live in Hagerstown Md. My daughter Jennifer is 33 and has been self directing for the past 12 years following her exit from HS. Jennifer has multiple severe disabilities. Each plan year the waiver provides a budget for Jennifer based upon her needs which then allows her to be a part of her community and remain safe. The Self Direction Act of 2022 has been a god send for older parents like me as a path towards sustainability of Jennifer's self-directed services as I age or am no longer available to help her to manage the many details of her program. The ability to hire a Day-to-Day Administrator through IFDGS will allow Jen to continue to live in her own home with staffing and vendors who are providing person centered support designed by her team. We are currently interviewing to fill the Day-to-Day Administrative support position. This individual will manage Jens 7 employees by doing scheduling, tracking benefits, monitoring employee skills, coordination of education and training for our employees who are CMT certified, household management, scheduling with vendors, and other medical providers.

These are all tasks I currently perform without pay. Over the past twelve years Jen and her team of supports has developed a true person-centered program. When I am gone this will all end if the the availability of the Day-to-day administrator is eliminated with the current arbitrary \$5,000 cap of these funds proposed in BRFA. Other individualized services such as classes to help with behavior management goals and dental costs are available with these funds. I'd be happy to provide more details about how blocking access to these funds would be harmful to Jennifer.

My daughter will be harmed if she is not allowed to access her unallocated funds in her budget and an ARBITRARY Limit is imposed. My budget was set by the DDA and my IFDGS is part of my service plan and budget due to my needs as assessed by the DDA.

Remove from the BRFA (HB352/SB362) any reference to Article-Health General Section 7-101 & Section 7-409. Leave all provisions of the Self Direction Act of 2022 intact. Do not allow the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) to place an arbitrary limit on Individual-Directed Family Good and Services (IFDGS) for individuals who are self-directing in the Community Pathways Waiver!!!

Thank you.
Karen Bowers
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