

From: Timothy and Jae Johnson on behalf of Michelle Johnson

2/26/2024

5216 Red Maple Drive

Frederick, Maryland 21703

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.

We are participants on behalf of Michelle Johnson and who receives DDA Waiver services under the self-directed service model.

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 Michelle's independence, community inclusion, health and safety concerns.

IFDGS is part of Michelle's approved plan and budget based on her assessed support needs--direct services such as, Personal Supports, Community Integration, Job Supports, and more. The rates for these services were set by DDA and the budget generated for Michelle's needs should be available to her.

Please Note: IFDGS spending does not add additional funds it merely allows access to the approved funds within the budget.

IFDGS funding helps people stay healthy, active, and productively engaged in their communities. IFDGS supports peoples' independence and helps keep them safe. IFDGS Day-to-day administrative supports aim to help sustain peoples' ability to self-direct, even when their parents or siblings are not able to help.

Since the changes to waiver resulting from the Act became effective July 1, 2023, Michelle has been able to access the funds from her DDA approved budget in order to reach the outcomes and goals in her person centered plan.

All Michelle's supports are critical to her continued development and future care. At the age of 25, many young women are just graduating from college, starting a career, a family, enjoying their independence without boundaries and disabilities impeding them. Michelle is working hard toward a portion of this. Her disability has existed since birth and the prognosis is it is permanent, and she will never reach these and other goals set forth unless we as a society, state, government, country help her throughout her lifetime. She along with others with disabilities didn't ask to be born this way. She is a beautiful caring loving young lady that deserves to be happy, prosperous, and have the opportunities and quality of life

we all enjoy. Although there are things that won't be possible, taking away what is in fact possible, such as any funding or programs that exist or can exist, in support of her and others with disabilities would be another tragic disappointment and setback in her life and the lives of others with disabilities and those that support them.

Please don't leave me and others behind, help us continue to help them, for those who cannot help themselves.



Michelle Johnson

Michelle Johnson
02/26/2024

Timothy Johnson

Timothy Johnson
02/26/2024

Jae Johnson

Jae Johnson
02/26/2024