

TESTIMONY

HB0352/SB0362 The Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2024
Gabler Family Position, February 27, 2024
UNFAVORABLE

The Gabler Family respectfully requests that this bill not be approved in its current state, and that the following actions be taken:

1. Remove from the BRFA (HB352/SB362) any reference to ARTICLE-HEALTH-GENERAL SECTION 7-101 & SECTION 7-409.
2. Leave all the provisions of the Self Direction Act of 2022 (The Act) intact. Do not allow the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) to place an arbitrary limit on Individual-Directed and Family-Directed Goods and Services (IFDGS) for individuals in the self-directed service model.

My name is Martha Gabler. I am the mother and Legal Guardian of Douglas Gabler, a nonverbal 27-year-old man with severe autism. Douglas has participated in Self-Directed Services under the DDA Community Pathways Waiver since 2017.

We oppose these changes because they would reverse a major provision of the Self Direction Act of 2022 and would allow the DDA to establish an arbitrary limit on Individual and Family Directed Goods and Services (IFDGS). Such a cap would have an adverse impact on Douglas's quality of life. In fact, Douglas is already experiencing havoc and distress.

We have just been told that Douglas's major invoice for Community Development Services, which has always been covered by his Community Development budget allocation, is now going to be transferred to IFDGS for payment! This change was totally unannounced and unexplained. We are mystified and upset because we don't understand how his invoice will be handled under IFDGS. Could his Community Development Services be curtailed because of a cap on IFDGS? The \$5,000 proposed cap on IFDGS would eliminate his Community Development Services. How is this possible? Does the state of Maryland want to deny Douglas access to the community in a way that is appropriate and joyful for him?

Every invoice or service that Douglas uses has been scrutinized during the development of his Person-Centered Plan; his budget has then been allocated to specific categories by the DDA, based on his significant and well-documented support needs. The rates for these services are set by DDA. We feel that the budget generated for Douglas should be available to him in as flexible and consistent a format as possible.

Since the Self-Direction Act became effective July 1, 2023, Douglas has been able to use funds from his DDA approved budget to access services that he values and that are in accord with the goals in his Person-Centered Plan. Why take away this from him? Please remove the references to Sections 7-101 and 7-409, and leave the Self Direction Act intact. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

The Gabler Family (Martha and Eric Gabler, parents and Legal Guardians of Douglas, and Douglas)
10125 Markham St.
Silver Spring, MD 20901
Cell: 301-641-1943
Martha.gabler@gmail.com

I'm the boss! I self-direct!



Remove all references to ARTICLE – HEALTH – GENERAL Section 7-101 & 7-409 from SB0362 and HB 0352.

We are in opposition to any provision that alters the mandates of The Self-Direction of 2022.

**Thank you for the Self-Direction Act of 2022!
Preserving Individual and Family Directed
Goods and Services (IFDGS) Matters to Me!**



My DDA Self-Direction funding helps me to ...

... be happy, healthy, and engaged! My name is Douglas Gabler. I am 27 years old. I am profoundly nonverbal and have severe autism. Often, I suffer bouts of Self-Injurious Behavior when I bite my hands and punch myself in the face. It's not a pretty picture. Autism is tough.

I am also a cheerful guy who loves to go out and have a good time. I am outdoorsy and love to go hiking. I love my Community Development activities!

Every day I go to the Wheaton Public Riding Stable and take care of the horses and grounds. I unload the hay trailer, muck the pastures, and spray water to keep down dust in the riding arena. I need reliable, flexible Self-Directed Services!



Douglas Gabler
10125 Markham St.
Silver Spring, MD 20901
Home: 301-681-2716
Email:
Martha.gabler@gmail.com