

February 26, 2024

Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland
Delegate Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House
Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Delegate Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Senator Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate
Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice-Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Subject: Requested Amendment to Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act – HB352/SB362

Our son Adesola is 39 years old. He has Down syndrome, which primarily affects his cognitive abilities. He is limited in his ability to express himself and to understand what is communicated to him. His reading and writing abilities are at the grade school level. Nevertheless, he has many abilities and interests that have allowed him to live a fulfilled life.

A priority for us is to provide a situation for Ade that will allow him to live as independently as possible when we his parents are no longer here. Toward that goal, Maryland Self-Directed Services has been a godsend. Ade has been able to move into his own apartment, where he receives daily support from his self-directed staff. DDA Individual and Family Directed Goods and Services (IFDGS) funding helps our son access services that keep him healthy and productively engaged in his community. In addition, the IFDGS day-to-day administrator supports our son's ability to self-direct, even when we are no longer able to help.

Unfortunately, the 2024 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA) proposes to allow DDA to limit the IFDGS funding provided to an individual. We understand that DDA plans to cap annual IFDGS spending at \$5,000. This would seriously impair our son's access to community services and threaten his ability to self-direct. In particular, he would no longer be able to hire a day-to-day administrator to provide the needed oversight to ensure that his needs are being adequately met.

We ask you to amend HB352/SB362 by striking Page 20, lines 8-21, which would allow DDA to re-establish a limit on "the dollar amount of individual-directed and family-directed goods and services provided to a recipient."

Thank you!

Akinwale and Jacqueline Akinpelu
12048 Open Run Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042
jakinpelu@verizon.net