

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.**

I am a Support Broker and Vendor who provides 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 my clients' independence, community inclusion, health and safety.**

IFDGS is part of my clients' approved plan and budget based on their 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 their needs should be available to them.

**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 my clients have been able to access the funds from their DDA approved budget in order to reach the outcomes and goals in their person centered plan.

As a Support Broker I see that the services they receive that are provided by the IFDGS part of the budget are crucial to their social, emotional, and physical well-being. I spoke to a parents whose adult child is Self-Directed. She said that her son "is a recipient of the funding and it is truly a life-enriching blessing. He is on the autism spectrum and struggles with delayed comprehension and social situations. The funding allows him to

pursue his passion for art by participating in the program at Art Enables (a wonderful art gallery in Washington, D.C. which specializes in serving artists with disabilities). Without the goods and services funding, his attendance at Art Enables would be greatly reduced. He would not have the opportunity to socialize with fellow artists, collaborate with art professionals and have his art displayed in exhibits and social functions. It has made him a more well-rounded individual who is able to do what he loves in a safe and understanding environment". Another parent told me that IFDGS "[allows her son] to participate in costly activities. He now has a personal trainer and is a member of the YMCA. He is allowed Uber rides as necessary. She said that [IFDGS]... is giving families of considerably low income the opportunities that would have been financially impossible".

I am also a Vendor to Self-Directed participants and provide Social Skills Tutoring and facilitate Social Skills Groups. My clients are able to use their IFDGS funds for my service which helps them learn how to better converse, make friends, and improve their confidence.

IFDGS funds are crucial to the well-being of the Self-Directed participants. Please do not change the amount or restrict the funds.

*Signed,*

*Rachel Greenberg*