

# **SB859- The Arc Maryland\_Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ande Kolp

Position: FAV



The Arc Maryland  
8601 Robert Fulton Drive Suite  
140  
Columbia, MD 21046  
T 410.571.9320  
[www.thearcmd.org](http://www.thearcmd.org)

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
**SB859: State Department of Education – Division of  
Rehabilitation Services – Funding**

February 21, 2024

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Many people supported by The Arc have utilized services from the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) for employment support, training, and career exploration. Over the past few years, DORS has had a loss of PINS due to budget constraints, and this has caused delays in access to vital services for people with disabilities.

During the 2022 legislative session, House Bill 660–Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) was passed to establish a Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services (Chapter 331– Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland). The Commission was tasked with evaluating DORS and making recommendations on improving various aspects of DORS programs and services. The commission concluded its work in March 2023 and issued a final report, detailing several findings and recommendations to improve DORS services in Maryland.

This bill follows up on one of the Commission's main recommendations in the final report<sup>i</sup> – **that the Maryland General Assembly should statutorily ensure that the State adequately provides general funds, for DORS services, to meet the 21.3% federal funding match requirement. Without a committed appropriation for DORS funding, our state would be leaving millions of dollars on the table that could go toward additional DORS counselors and staff, and enhance timeliness and quality of critical employment services.**

The Vocational Rehabilitation program is considered a federal–state partnership program: funding for the services comes from two sources, the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration and the State of Maryland. The State is responsible for providing non–federal funding to meet the Match requirements that are set out in the Act. **The federal government will provide 78.7% of the total funding and the State is required to provide the remaining 21.3%, in order to receive the total allotment of federal grant funding each year.**

This bill ensures our state funding is sufficient to meet the threshold for receiving federal funding. The loss of federal funds would have a significant impact on DORS' ability to provide services and training for individuals. For these reasons, we encourage the committee to return a favorable vote on SB859.

For more information, please contact Ande Kolp, Executive Director, [akolp@thearcmd.org](mailto:akolp@thearcmd.org)

---

<sup>i</sup> [https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Gov-Rel/DORS\\_Commission\\_Final\\_A.pdf](https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Gov-Rel/DORS_Commission_Final_A.pdf)

# **SB859\_DORS services funding\_KennedyKrieger\_Support**

Uploaded by: Emily Arneson

Position: FAV



**DATE:** February 21, 2024 **COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation  
**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 859  
**BILL TITLE:** State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services - Funding  
**POSITION:** Support

**Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Senate Bill 859 - State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services - Funding**

**Bill Summary:**

This bill authorizes the Governor to include in the annual budget bill a state appropriation for the Division of Rehabilitative Services that meets the state match amount for the Division, as required by certain federal acts.

**Background:**

Kennedy Krieger's Neurodiversity at Work program takes a multi-faceted approach to hiring and retaining individuals of all abilities as part of the workforce. Neurodiversity at Work is a collective impact initiative designed to create and support gainful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing economic benefit for businesses and the larger community. The Neurodiversity at Work program fosters integrated workplace settings where all individuals can experience success and independence. Currently the program includes several specialty initiatives Project SEARCH, CORE Foundations a Developmental Disabilities Administration Licensed Agency, HR pathways hiring program, training and education services, legislative efforts, research, transition consultation services, and planning for a national conference and on-going events.

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an inclusive employer that believes that individuals with disabilities have the skills, talents, and drive to contribute significantly to the workforce and to the broader community. A neurodiverse workforce benefit all.

**Rationale:**

The Department of Rehabilitation Services, operating under the State Department of Education, plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals with disabilities to integrate into the workforce and community life. From age 14 onwards, these services offer a wide spectrum of support that is vital for those not eligible for Developmental Disabilities Administration services, or who require assistance before waiver eligibility at age 21.

Securing state funding, coupled with federal matching grants, is paramount to uphold Maryland's Employment First initiatives and ensuring equitable access to employment for all individuals with disabilities. However, the current funding landscape poses challenges, including waitlists and limited coverage.

Granting the Governor the flexibility to secure federal funding matches and augment the general fund allocation is imperative. This flexibility would bolster the Department's capacity to serve more individuals, reduce waitlists, and meet the diverse needs of Maryland's disability community effectively.

**Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 859.**

**DRMtestimony.SB859.pdf**

Uploaded by: Leslie Margolis

Position: FAV



Empowerment. Integration. Equality.

1500 Union Ave., Suite 2000, Baltimore, MD 21211

[www.DisabilityRightsMD.org](http://www.DisabilityRightsMD.org)

Phone: 410.727.6352

**SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE**

**SENATE BILL 859**

**State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services--Funding**

**February 21, 2024**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the protection and advocacy organization for the state of Maryland; the mission of the organization, part of a national network of similar agencies, is to advocate for the legal rights of people with disabilities throughout the state. Over the years, DRM has dedicated significant resources to representation of children and youth with disabilities in special education matters, both individual and systemic, and to educational policy work. In part, this work has focused on advocating for youth with disabilities who are transitioning out of the school system and moving on to higher education, employment, or community programs. For many of these students who are aging out of the special education services they have received for so many years, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is an essential partner in the transition process and beyond, providing services and supports to enable these young adults to obtain jobs and to be as independent as possible. DRM supports Senate Bill 859, which allows the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an increase in the general fund appropriation to ensure that the state match amount for the Division of Rehabilitation Services is met. With that funding comes the need for accountability and the assurance that DORS will improve the quality of the services it provides.

As a member of the Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services, created by the passage of House Bill 660 in 2022, DRM provided feedback regarding the recommendations of the Commission. Agreeing with the Commission's recommendation that DORS disseminate transitioning information, DRM recommended that the disseminated information include information about DORS and its services and about Pre-Employment Transition Services. Among its other recommendations, DRM suggested that specific information be gathered from the individuals seeking DORS services and that DORS and the Developmental Disabilities Administration meet regularly to target the locations and populations of people in need of greater education and outreach.

Addressing accountability, the Commission recommended that DORS provide performance information to all stakeholders and other agencies. DRM made additional recommendations about how this information could be provided to stakeholders so it would be meaningful.

Additionally, DRM made recommendations aimed at ensuring that people could access DORS services more quickly, that DORS staff would turn over less frequently, thereby increasing the quality of service to consumers, and that the Client Assistance Program, the office designated

to receive and investigate complaints about DORS, be moved out of DORS, where it is housed, and re-designated so it can be independent of the state agency it is mandated to hold accountable.

DRM fully supports Senate Bill 859's purpose of ensuring that all available funding be allocated to DORS. It is essential, however, that the funding be used to provide meaningful, effective and high quality services to transitioning youth and adults with disabilities to enable them to live as independently as possible and to obtain the higher education and employment of their choice.

For more information or if questions, please contact Megan Marie Jones at 443-692-2508 or [meganc@disabilityrightsmd.org](mailto:meganc@disabilityrightsmd.org) .

# 2024 MOTA SB 859 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV





# Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

---

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ [mota-members.com](http://mota-members.com)

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Senate Finance Committee</b>
<b>Bill Number:</b>	<b>Senate Bill 859</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services - Funding</b>
<b>Hearing Date:</b>	<b>February 21, 2024</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Support</b>

---

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *Senate Bill 859 – Division of Rehabilitation Services*. The bill authorizes the Governor to include an increase in the General Fund appropriation in the annual budget to meet the state match amount required for the Division of Rehabilitation Services (the Division) to receive full federal funding.

Occupational therapists in Maryland regularly work with clients receiving support through the Division. One of the biggest programs run by the Division is the Public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program which provides vocational and rehabilitative services to individuals with disabilities. The majority of the Division is funded by federal dollars but in order for Maryland to get the full funding available, the state must provide the appropriate matching amount. This bill will ensure that Maryland is consistently meeting the federal match so that this important program is receiving its full funding.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Michael Paddy at [mpaddy@policypartners.net](mailto:mpaddy@policypartners.net).

# **SB859\_Council\_Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

### Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

#### SB 859: State Department of Education – Division of Rehabilitation Services – Funding

February 21, 2024

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates changes to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. Our vision is that people with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together. The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is Maryland's vocational rehabilitation program, and receives most of its funding from a grant from the US Department of Education to provide support for people with disabilities to go to work, stay at a job, and prepare for the world of work.

- 9,930 adults (age 25 and older) currently receive employment services from DORS
- 12,731 youth (ages 14-24) currently receive employment services from DORS
- 1,998 people are waiting for these employment services<sup>i</sup>

#### WHAT does this bill do?

- Allows the Governor to include a General Fund (GF) appropriation for the required state match for the federal funds the Division of Rehabilitation Services receives.

#### WHY is it important?

- **Ensures federal funding for employment services in Maryland.** Funding the state match ensures DORS meets the federal match requirements each year.
- **Ensures DORS can provide critical employment services people need and want.** The State needs to adequately provide the general funds to meet the federal match requirement so DORS can focus on meeting the needs of Marylanders.
- **People wait a long time for DORS services.** Ensuring Maryland gets the federal vocational rehabilitation funding each year helps expand training and services in community-based settings, and increases accountability of the DORS programs and services.

For all these reasons, the Council supports SB 859.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, [RLondon@md-council.org](mailto:RLondon@md-council.org)

---

<sup>i</sup> DORS website, February 14, 2024. < <https://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/about/Pages/numbers.aspx>>

# **Testimony In Support of SB 859 - HB 1163 - DORS Fu**

Uploaded by: Rich Ceruolo

Position: FAV



February 20, 2024

Maryland Senate  
11 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD. 21401

**In Support of SB 859 / HB 1163: DORS Funding**

Members of the Maryland House Senate's Budget and Taxation Committee.

We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1500 plus members fully support our teens and adults with disabilities within our communities and what SB 859 / HB 1163 might do to support them.

I too am the parent of a child with multiple challenges and disabilities. I am a member of Parent Advocacy Consortium, and we advocate for children like my son, and other individuals with disabilities that require time, resources and support to help them build their areas of major life skills in the ways that works best for them, as individuals.

Just like the development of major life skills, it is extremely important to preserve and increase the funding for programs like DORS. Without this training many of our children would be unable to work toward goals of career training, driving and living an independent life.

Please return a favorable report and support SB 859 / HB 1163.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our testimony here today.

Respectfully,

Mr. Richard Ceruolo | [richceruolo@gmail.com](mailto:richceruolo@gmail.com)  
Parent, Lead Advocate and Director of Public Policy  
Parent Advocacy Consortium (Find us on Facebook/Meta)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentAdvocacyConsortium>

**SB859\_Zucker\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Craig Zucker

Position: FAV

CRAIG J. ZUCKER  
Legislative District 14  
Montgomery County



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 122  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3625 • 301-858-3625  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3625  
Fax 410-841-3618 • 301-858-3618  
Craig.Zucker@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee  
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker  
Senate Bill 859 - State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services-  
Funding  
February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024  
1:00 PM  
Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill 859 - State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services - Funding.**

Senate Bill 859 authorizes the Governor to include funding in the annual budget for the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to receive its fully allotted share of federal vocational rehabilitation grant funding. DORS is an agency of the Maryland State Department of Education and is composed of the public vocational rehabilitation employment services program and the Disability Determination Services. Through various programs, DORS prepares people with disabilities for the world of work by offering career assessment services, career and skills training, job placement assistance, assistive technology services and support services.

Under federal regulations, to receive full funding, a state must contribute 21.3% of funding for vocational programs and maintain at least its prior year funding amount for the program. During the 2022 legislative session, the General Assembly passed legislation establishing a State commission to study DORS. The commission subsequently produced a report in which it recommended ensuring in state statute the funding provisions required under federal regulations.

Senate Bill 859 ensures federal funding for employment services in Maryland, improves service delivery, and will greatly reduce the waitlist to receive services to rehabilitate and place individuals with disabilities into gainful employment and to function more independently.

For these reasons, **I urge the committee for a favorable report on Senate Bill 859.** Thank you for your kind consideration.

# **SB859 DORS Funding.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sharon Maneki

Position: FAV



Subject: Support with an Amendment for SB859 State Department of Education – Division of Rehabilitation Services – Funding

Date: February 21, 2024

From: Sharon Maneki

National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

15 Charles Plaza, #3002, Baltimore, MD 21201

[president@nfbmd.org](mailto:president@nfbmd.org)

To: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland wholeheartedly support SB859 because the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is responsible for helping persons with disabilities including the blind with employment services. This bill outlines the procedures necessary to acquire federal money and to disperse it. The governor must put state money in the budget to get the federal funds. This bill should be amended to specifically require that the state should not be giving federal money back because it did not spend the appropriate state funding. The Department of Education which houses DORS should take specific action to spend the federal and state money on DORS clients. It is unbelievable that the state would give back federal funds.

Blind people of working age require many services such as adjustment to blindness training, acquisition of specialized equipment such as assistive technology, the ability to attend college or a work-related training program, etc. The delivery of these services takes time and money. Common sense dictates that the State of Maryland should do everything possible to take advantage of federal money.

Every person with a disability would prefer to work and become a taxpayer. This bill will make the dream of work a reality. Persons with disabilities will become taxpayers so the money for training and other services is well spent. Please vote in favor of SB859.

