



March 19, 2024

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
The Honorable Brian Feldman
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: House Bill 420: State and Local Parks - Play Area Accessibility -
Communication Boards**

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of The Arc Central Chesapeake Region in SUPPORT of HB420: State and Local Parks - Play Area Accessibility - Communication Boards.

The Arc Central Chesapeake Region (The Arc) serves over 3,000 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in Anne Arundel County and Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Arc's mission is to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live the lives they choose by creating opportunities, promoting respect and equity, and providing access to services.

At The Arc, our Vice President of Engagement, Greg Snyder, served on the Maryland Developmental Disability Council Inclusive Playground Advisory Group. The workgroup's focus was on developing a framework for promoting inclusive playgrounds throughout Maryland. The workgroup found that, "An inclusive playground should have ramps that lead to an element a person with a disability can play with. This could be a sensory board, a slide, or a communication board."

Accessibility is important in creating access and opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our communities. With the passage of this bill, we are making progress on building inclusive communities for the children, youth, and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities. By adding communication boards to parks throughout the state, we are creating parks that are as accessible as possible for as many people as possible.

The unfortunate reality is that there aren't many accessible playgrounds in Maryland – but every child deserves to play and connect at their playground, regardless of their abilities; HB 420 will ensure that we can achieve this goal in Maryland. For these reasons, The Arc strongly supports this important legislation and urges the Committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jonathon Rondeau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jonathon Rondeau
President & CEO