



## People On the Go of Maryland

**HB 822**

**Maryland Medical Assistance Program -  
Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID)**

*Requiring the Maryland Department of Health to provide Maryland Medical Assistance Program services for qualified applicants who are at least 16 years old, and for existing Program recipients under the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program in accordance with certain requirements; prohibiting the Department from limiting eligibility to receive services under the EID Program based on certain criteria; etc.*

**Position: Support**

**March 6, 2024**

**Sponsored by Delegate Bonnie Cullison**

**Assigned to Health and Government Operations**

**Written by Mat Rice**

**People On the Go of Maryland**

Honorable chairperson, and distinguished members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

People On the Go of Maryland (POG) is a statewide self-advocacy organization, ran for and by those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). Our mission is to promote self-advocacy throughout the state. We believe in equal access to community resources; and that all people have the right to live, work, love, and play in the communities of their choosing, regardless of whether or not they have a disability or significant support needs.

People on the Go is pleased to provide this written testimony in strong support of House Bill 822 (HB 0822), which would expand access to the Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program (EID). We support this bill because:

- It would expand access to the EID program for younger individuals with disabilities, which will integrate them into the workforce more quickly; and
- It would prevent the Department of Health from denying eligibility for this program to those who are over the age of 65, or are about to turn 65.

POG believes in the dignity of work for all people, regardless of disability or support need. Costs of living become more significant as people age, due to their greater health and support needs.

Many counter-arguments have been made about this Bill's fiscal impact upon the state's budget. People on the Go recognizes the importance of fiscal responsibility, which prompts us to ask:

Is it truly fiscally responsible to force people with disabilities into retirement, and possibly into nursing homes, by denying them the right to continue to be gainfully employed?

Consider also: Our peers without disabilities are already extending their employment beyond age 65, because increased costs of living have made retirement not feasible economically, until several years later.

Maryland legislators will not foster a culture of responsibility and mutual interdependence, by forcing people into retirement when they may not want to

retire. Far better to remove citizens' fear of losing their eligibility for benefits, and give them the incentive to continue performing rewarding work.

People On the Go advises that the hypothetical fiscal impact of expanding eligibility for EID, will be offset by the greater number of taxpaying citizens, including those with disabilities, who continue in their employment beyond age 65.

For these reasons, People On the Go strongly advises a favorable report for passage of HB 822. Thank you for your consideration.

Should you have any questions, please contact Mat Rice.

Thank you,

Mat Rice, Executive Director

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