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SHERIFF MAXWELL C. UY

March 4, 2024

Senator William Smith, Jr.
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 1096 – Vehicle Laws – Licenses, Identification Cards and Moped
Operator's Permits – Identification of Nonapparent Disability

Dear Senator Smith,

I am writing to both express and offer my support for the proposed “Eric’s ID Law” that we expect will assist in the identification of individuals with nonapparent disabilities. My understanding is that such nonapparent disabilities covered by the legislation may include everything from discrete conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, hearing impairments and autism to broader categorical conditions such as intellectual, developmental and mental health disabilities generally. As a law enforcement leader, I recognize the potential for tragic results that always exists when a misunderstanding occurs in communication between public safety professionals and individuals who may have physical, mental, and/or neurological conditions that are not immediately obvious or visible. Providing a mechanism to allow for identification of that status on individuals’ licenses and identification cards should go far to avoid such tragedies during encounters with law enforcement personnel and first responders.

The proposed law would allow individuals with nonapparent disabilities to voluntarily apply to indicate such status with a uniform notation – “ND” – on their Maryland state driver’s license or identification card. There are a host of mutual benefits in creating this identification process. Such an identifier serves to communicate that a nonapparent disability exists at a time when law enforcement or first responders are attempting to initially assess a situation whether it is a mental health crisis or simply a routine inspection. It also serves the added benefit of deescalating a situation where a lack of information may otherwise provoke tragic consequences when law enforcement or first responders are unable to understand an individual’s noncompliant behavior. Last, this legislation has the additional potential to lessen the emotional anxiety that foreseeably results when others, including law enforcement question the legitimacy of their conditions.

I applaud the efforts of Eric and Linda Carpenter-Grantham to address the safety concerns of these individuals with special needs and their interactions with law enforcement professionals. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions and thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Maxwell C. Uy
Sheriff