

SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

March 5, 2024

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

Position: Support with Amendments

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As a parent with an adult son with autism and co-chair of the Governmental Affairs committee for the Arc of Maryland I have expressed concerns about SB 1096 as it stands. As such, I would like you to accept the friendly amendments that are being recommended by the Arc of Maryland. Only adding an ND designation to the card will not meet the outcomes desired by the bill as it now reads for individuals with nonapparent disabilities.

Training of law enforcement individuals is crucial. The Ethan Saylor Alliance was created in 2015 to provide this essential training to law enforcement since individuals with nonapparent disabilities may exhibit unexpected behaviors when under the stress of being stopped by law enforcement. Providing information and training benefits not only the individuals with nonapparent disabilities but law enforcement as well so that they possess the tools necessary to respond to individuals rather than make an unfortunate mistake which may lead to harm for both the individual and law enforcement. Funding for the Ethan Saylor Alliance has remained stagnant and must be resolved.

It is my understanding that the notation ND can never be removed once placed on the license/identification card. This information will be stored in the MVA system forever, never to be fully purged. I would strongly agree with the Arc of Maryland that the state should strengthen the use of the blue card which was created several years ago for similar purposes. The advantage of the blue card is that individuals would voluntarily self-disclose to the police their disability by carrying the blue card along with their identification/license without the establishment of a permanent record. All individuals would benefit including law enforcement and those with limited words and the permanent record would be protected.

It is also my understanding that the use of this card would be a basis for initiating a review by the Medical Advisory Board which could lead to a physician recertification process on a periodic basis for the individual to drive. This level of scrutiny should not be automatic. Therefore, this bill needs to protect individuals who have ND on their license from this practice.

Thank you for reviewing my concerns regarding this bill.

