MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION
Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

House Ways and Means Committee
February 7, 2024
HB 60: Rehabilitation Services – Disability - Definition
Position: <u>Support</u>

8601 Robert Fulton Dr
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046

1500 Union Avenue
Suite 2000
Baltimore, MD 21211

8835 Columbia 100 Pky
Suite P
Columbia, MD 21044

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

217 E Redwood Street
Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202

7000 Tudsbury Road
Windsor Mill, MD 21244

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. As such, the DD Coalition supports HB 60.

WHAT does this legislation do?
- It changes the definition of disability to "physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment of independent living."

WHY is this important?
- **The proposed definition aligns with federal law.** The disability community advocated for Federal language changes that removed mention of "defect," "infirmities," and "incapacitation" which are outdated and offensive.

- **While disability may result in the need for additional supports and services to meaningfully engage in employment or independent living, disability is a natural part of the human experience and does not diminish the right of people to meaningfully participate in society.**

- State vocational rehabilitation (VR) services programs, authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), provide services for people with disabilities to prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency. **The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is Maryland's VR program, and plays a critical role for people with disabilities who want to get or keep a job.**

Contact:
Rachel London, Executive Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
<u>rlondon@md-council.org</u>