



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 13, 2024

HB 727: Motor Vehicles - Driving Records - Disclosure of Medical Diagnosis (Safeguarding American Families Everywhere Act)

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The Council is led by a diverse group of people with developmental disabilities and family members of people with developmental disabilities. One of our priorities includes the need for people with developmental disabilities to be protected and respected by law enforcement.

There are many strong and diverse opinions about including a medical diagnosis on an application for a **driver's license**. Arguments range from the voluntary disclosure will protect people with disabilities by providing necessary information to law enforcement during interactions with people with disabilities, to the deeply held belief that it is not possible to ensure adequate protections or safety for people with disabilities without more training and accountability for law enforcement.

Given the diverse perspectives we represent, we oppose this bill and offer the following for consideration:

- Promote and/or expand the MVA voluntary Developmental Disability Self-Disclosure Cards. We understand that voluntary notations are forever stored in the current system used by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA). This is why, in 2020, the Maryland General Assembly passed SB885/HB1118 (Ch. 427) to require the Maryland MVA to provide voluntary Developmental Disability Self-Disclosure Cards. These cards may be used by someone with a developmental disability to self-disclose a disability to police. The MVA now has these cards available upon request. These cards does NOT create an electronic record of voluntary disability disclosure as HB 727 would do.
- Promote and expand mandatory training for law enforcement and accountability measures. In 2015, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to create the Ethan Saylor Alliance (ESA) for Self Advocates as Educators. The ESA uses best practice in training by having people with disabilities take the central role in educating and informing law enforcement about how to safely and supportively interact with people with disabilities. In addition, once the required training is completed, the law enforcement officer should be expected to engage with Marylanders with disabilities as they were trained. If they are in violation, penalties or disciplinary measures should be implemented.

Our members feel strongly about the need to preserve the rights of people with disabilities to avoid stigma and targeted victimization. Our members also feel strongly that we need to protect people with disabilities who choose not to self-disclose. That means if a person with disabilities does not want to disclose their disability should be treated with the same compassion, understanding, and respect as other Marylanders.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, RLondon@md-council.org