



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Health and Government Operations Committee

February 2, 2025

HB 221: Department of Information Technology – Maryland Digital Service - Establishment

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need. HB 221 is another way to make sure that happens.

What does HB 221 do?

- Establishes the Maryland Digital Service (MDDS) within the Department of Information Technology (DOIT)
- Centralizes a unit of DOIT to collaborate with other agencies, departments, and units of State government to support improved service delivery
- Prioritizes the development, procurement, and implementation of user-friendly, accessible, and multilingual digital platforms

Why is this important?

- **It prioritizes accessible, inclusive government, and helps dismantle barriers for Marylanders.** The primary purpose of MDDS is to enhance service delivery to Maryland residents and state agency staff through user-centered design, software development, and best practices in product management.
- **Making information accessible to everyone is fundamentally a practice of inclusion.** Technology is a central way Marylanders access and use services the State provides, and HB 221 directly addresses the diverse needs of all Marylanders.

The Council's vision is that people with and without disabilities live, learn, work, and play together. To make that happen, everyone must be able to access the information and resources they need and want. The Council continues to work closely with DoIT to implement Maryland's Plain Language Initiative. It is clear that the MDDS is ready to address gaps in access to information in digital services, such as inconsistent accessibility, outdated design, and other barriers for Marylanders. **The Council strongly supports HB 221 because it helps make State services more accessible, equitable, and efficient.**

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