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Executive Director

House Appropriations Committee HB 152: Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020 February 27, 2020

The Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) is a non-profit association of over 100 agencies across Maryland serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (DD). MACS members provide residential, day and supported employment services to thousands of Marylanders, so that they can live, work and fully participate in their communities.

As the budget committees know better than most, DD community providers have been grappling with high staff turnover and vacancy rates, and the rise in state and local minimum wages has exacerbated an already crisis level situation. It was for this reason that the developmental disabilities community undertook a tremendous grassroots effort last year as the 2019 Minimum Wage Act was considered. Without the 4% increase that was ultimately included in the minimum wage bill, community services, and the 25,000 Marylanders with DD they support, would have been jeopardized. DD community providers have absorbed the minimum wage increase that took effect January 1, 2020, and then absorbed the news that the Governor had reduced the mandated increase to 2% for FY 21. The missing 2% represents a gap of \$25 million in state and federal funds for a system in *desperate* need of stabilization. If not restored to 4% across the board on July 1, 2020, many providers will be in danger of closing their doors—a danger that likewise exists if the 4% is restored but deferred to January 1, 2021, as recommended by the budget analysts. Without community providers and a stable, qualified workforce, the ability of Marylanders with developmental disabilities to live the inclusive lives in the community they are entitled to, is endangered.

On behalf of over 100 developmental disability community providers in Maryland, and the thousands of Marylanders we provide supports to every day, **MACS urges the House Appropriations Committee to support and protect the FY 2021 DDA budget and to take whatever measures are within its powers to protect DD community services in the face of other budget demands.**

Thank you for your consideration.

For more information, contact Laura Howell: lhowell@macsonline.org