

January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Good afternoon, I am Edward Willard an advocate for the rights of Citizens with disabilities. In years past I had the honor of representing a few advocacy organizations, however, due to this wonderful phase in life called retirement, this session I will be representing myself as a citizen of Maryland.

Due to a prior commitment I need to submit written testimony, instead of testifying in person. My testimony is to ask for your full support of House Bill 10, regarding adult changing tables in public restrooms.

Having Cerebral Palsy and working in the disabilities field thirty years, I thought I knew everything there is to know about people with disabilities. This drastically changed a few years ago when having a conversation with a former coworker of mine. She is a Mother of a young woman with Cerebral Palsy. She told me about how challenging it was for both her daughter and the entire family to be away from their house for long periods of time. Continuing by saying, they needed to factor in the distance to where they were going, whether or not they needed to take two cars, and yes even if her daughter could go, and who would stay with her. The soul reason this family had to consider core basic things was this young lady had nowhere to tend to her bathroom needs. Having the conversation was a total punch in the gut for me, because I never thought anything about citizens with disabilities not being able to leave their homes due to not having appropriate bathroom facilities, and the number of people and families who are effected. Several public places already have private bathrooms. They are usually called family restrooms, which are fantastic especially in airports. Adding an adult size changing table to these facilities would be virtually no extra effort or cost.

Nationally, there is a strong movement to transition people from segregated day programs to having a meaningful day in the community. One of the biggest oppositions we hear about with the transition is people with significant disabilities would have no place to take care of their bathroom needs. People who depend on adult diapers obviously must lay on a flat surface when they are changed. Should Legislation for Adult changing stations be not passed the risk for more citizens with disabilities becoming isolated is high.

Again, thank you for your consideration of supporting House Bill 10.

Testimony submitted by,

Edward H. Willard Jr,

Private Citizen of Maryland