



Testimony in Opposition of HB 691

March 3, 2020

Assigned to Health and Government Operations

**Health Occupations - Nurse Practitioners - Certifications of
Competency and Incapacity**

Sponsored by Delegate Cullison

Written by Mat Rice

People On the Go of Maryland (POG) is Maryland's statewide self-advocacy organization ran for and by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are here today to testify in opposition to HB 691. POG has been in existence for 30 years and we strive to educate people with disabilities about their rights and responsibilities. This legislation as it would expand the number of professionals able to sign a certificate of incompetency for a guardianship petition to include nurse practitioners, without requiring any specialization or training requirements. Guardianship in most cases is permit and strips the civil rights of individuals of their ability to make an informed decision regardless of a person's IQ or diagnoses, with little regard to their actual capabilities or the presence of less restrictive alternatives like powers of attorney or surrogate decision-making. Maryland law mandates that less restrictive alternatives to guardianship be pursued before guardianship is imposed.

In conclusion POG sees it as necessary to reiterate the point that all people regardless of level of disability or support needs should have the same fundamental rights as those without disabilities; the most fundamental of all rights is the right to choose the course of one's own life regardless of whether or not somebody agrees with our individual choices people on the go sees this legislation as potentially setting the cause of civil rights for people with disabilities back significantly, finally what we must remember is that if we are lucky to have a long life those that don't have disabilities today will have disabilities tomorrow, what would you want for yourself a less restrictive alternative or would you want to be subject to guardianship for all of these reasons people on the go respectfully requests an unfavorable report for this legislation.