



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

Senate Finance and Budget & Taxation Committees SB 307: Labor and Employment - Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program

Position: Support

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The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). One of the most significant challenges facing our community is the high vacancy rate and turnover of the direct support workforce that is the backbone of community inclusion for over 17,000 Marylanders—a crisis that has deepened over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. While we do not yet have complete pandemic era numbers, prior to the pandemic:

- 1 in 3 direct support staff didn't stay in their jobs 6 months;
- over half of direct support staff did not last a full year (and the vast majority left voluntarily because of high stress, low-wage work-- they can make as much if not more working for retailers and other employers);
- half of all IDD providers had a direct support vacancy rate over 16%;
- 1 in 4 providers had a direct support vacancy rate over 24%.

As Medicaid providers, DDA-licensed community-based organizations are dependant upon the rates established and paid by the State to deliver community supports to people with IDD. While pay rates are an important factor in the IDD workforce crisis, we know that other recruitment and retention strategies can have a positive impact on the stability of the workforce. Grants that support training, curriculum, career ladders, accreditation and other innovative ideas that have proven to be effective for the IDD workforce would provide important resources needed to increase the quality and longevity of these vital professionals.

We believe the grants envisioned by SB 307 would help improve the quality of life for the thousands of Marylanders with IDD who rely on direct support professionals to make inclusive lives a reality.

Respectfully submitted.

For additional information, contact Lauren Kallins, LKallins@macsonline.org