



**SB061- Public Buildings: Changing Facilities- Requirements
Judicial Proceedings Committee
January 28, 2021
Position: Support**

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We believe every person deserves to fully and equitably access their community and we urge the committee's full support of SB061.

People with developmental disabilities desire the opportunity to leave their homes and participate in their communities. Many work and want to meet up with friends and family, attend events, shop, and worship amongst an array of many other community activities.

During the pandemic, most of us experienced first-hand what it was like to not have access to a bathroom when we needed one. Stores and restaurants closed their bathrooms to patrons during this time, and most of us could not stay out in the community for longer than a couple of hours at a time before needing to return home to use the bathroom. Now, imagine this being your way of life- pandemic or no pandemic. If you are a person with physical disabilities or a need for physical assistance to use the bathroom, this is what you experience all the time.

When fully accessible bathrooms (those equipped with changing stations) are unavailable, individuals who require personal hygiene assistance are often changed in the backs of cars, tailgates of vans or trucks, on the grass or in parking lots (while family members hold up blankets for privacy barriers), on the laps of their caregivers in a toilet stall, and all too frequently-- on the floor of a public bathroom.

According to statistics provided by the Dignified Changes advocacy group, more than 17 million individuals experience urinary incontinence and this number is expanding as our population ages and the percentage of people with disabilities increases.

SB61 is not just a bill about creating dignified, private, and hygienic places for personal hygiene and changing: It is about honoring the humanity of our fellow community members and recognizing the unfair challenges they face to finding a bathroom they can use throughout the day.

People with developmental disabilities, older adults, veterans with paralysis or other physical disabilities, and those with complex medical conditions all deserve privacy,

human dignity, and equitable access to public bathrooms. We all deserve a dignified change in the law and we urge the committee's favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ande Kolp", written in a cursive style.

Ande Kolp
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