

Ellen Callegary Favorable Testimony on March 23 20

Uploaded by: Ellen Callegary

Position: FAV

Ellen A. Callegary, Esq.

The Law Offices of Ellen A. Callegary, P.A.

EDUCATION, HEALTH and ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HB 660: Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services (Student Job Training Reformation Act)

March 23, 2022

Position: Support

The attorneys in The Law Offices of Ellen A. Callegary, P.A. represent students with disabilities throughout Maryland. For over forty years, I have worked to protect the most vulnerable members of our community --- children and adults with disabilities. Beginning with my time as an Assistant Attorney General in Maryland in 1979 and continuing through today as a private attorney working on their behalf. Because of my concern for individuals with disabilities in Maryland, I support House Bill 660, which would create a Commission to study and evaluate the operation of the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS). This bill is much needed, as many of our clients with disabilities are not able to easily access appropriate services from DORS. Personally, I have seen my family members with disabilities struggle to get the supports they need to be productive members of our communities.

Typically, DORS first becomes involved with our clients through the individualized education program (IEP) process. Sometimes, DORS representatives are invited to participate in IEP Team Meetings when the team is discussing the transition services a student with disabilities needs to be successful after graduation. Often the services that are offered are extremely limited. They are not the highly individualized services that our clients need in order to make the tough transition to the adult service systems and the world of work.

Many families report that their family members did not receive meaningful rehabilitative services for their loved ones. Although DORS' Pre-Employment Transition Services are supposed to better prepare students in high school for transition and for employment, these services are not robust enough. Because full DORS services are not available to most students following graduation, and because the quality of transition services is so variable across the state, many students with disabilities who don't have the most significant disabilities are left in a void when they leave high school, prepared for neither employment nor other post-secondary options and left without the supports they need to be able to access those opportunities.

I strongly support HB 660 and urge a Favorable Report.

HB660_ DORS_KennedyKrieger_Support_SENATE.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Arneson

Position: FAV



DATE: March 23, 2022 **COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
BILL NO: House Bill 660
BILL TITLE: Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services (Student Job Training Reformation Act)
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Houser Bill 660 – Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services (Student Job Training Reformation Act)

Bill Summary:

HB660 establishes the Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services to evaluate and make recommendations on improving various aspects of the Division of Rehabilitation Services' programs and services.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger's Neurodiversity at Work program takes a multi-faceted approach to hiring and retaining individuals of all abilities as part of the workforce. Neurodiversity at Work is a collective impact initiative designed to create and support gainful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing economic benefit for businesses and the larger community. The Neurodiversity at Work program fosters integrated workplace settings where all individuals can experience success and independence. Currently the program includes several specialty initiatives Project SEARCH, CORE Foundations a Developmental Disabilities Administration licensed agency, HR pathways hiring program, training and education services, legislative efforts, research, transition consultation services, and planning for a national conference and on-going events.

CORE Foundations at Kennedy Krieger Institute is a Community Rehabilitation Partner through the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and provides short-term employment services for individuals with disabilities including but not limited to; job development preparation, job development, and job coaching.

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an inclusive employer that believes that individuals with disabilities have the skills, talents, and drive to contribute significantly to the workforce and to the broader community. A neurodiverse workforce benefits all.

Rationale:

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) has crucial services for individuals with disabilities. These programs are the building blocks for a successful transition from school to meaningful employment and increasing independence. If utilized to maximum capacity, the range of services available can support students from as early as age 14 years through adulthood. Accessing services through DORS can be challenging for many individuals with disabilities, and has become significantly more challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, the Division of Rehabilitation Services provided services to 21,898 individuals with significant disabilities, of which 42% were between the ages of 14 and 24 years (DORS annual report, 2020). This number represents a relatively small fraction of the individuals in Maryland living with disabilities. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Disability and Health Data System there were 1,040,158 Marylanders living with a disability in 2019. According to the *Study of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process and the Adequate Funding Level for Students with Disabilities* completed by WestEd during the 2017-2018 school year there were 97,233 students with individualized education plans in the Maryland School Systems.

Establishing the Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services is a formal way to review and analyze the current policies, processes, and efficiencies of DORS, with the goal of making systemic change to increase DORS services and make them available to more Marylanders with disabilities. With access to the right support services, individuals with disabilities contribute significantly to the economic growth of Maryland communities.

Through our Neurodiversity at Work program, Kennedy Krieger has first-hand experience on the positive impact that a consumer receiving services through DORS has on obtaining meaningful employment. A sequence of services that are accessible and continually evaluated will set a DORS consumer up for success.

Maryland has done outstanding work for the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in our community and meaningful services available to Marylanders; however, there is a very large discrepancy between the number of individuals with disabilities receiving services versus the number of Marylanders with disabilities who may need such services. As an Employment First State, there is value in collaboration between agencies that support individuals with disabilities to expand service options, increase capacity, and increase employment outcomes in the state of Maryland. By establishing this Commission, a strategic plan may be developed that has the potential to increase capacity to serve more Marylanders.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 660

Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Division of Human Development and Disability. Disability and Health Data System (DHDS) Data [online]. [accessed Feb 20, 2022]. URL: <https://dhds.cdc.gov>

Jason Willis, Sara Menlove Doutre, & Alex Berg Jacobson (2019). Study of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process and the Adequate Funding Level for Students with Disabilities. West Ed. [accessed Fe 20,2022]URL:<https://marylandpublicschools.org/Documents/IEPStudy/MDSpecialEdIEPAdequacyStudyConsolidatedReportFinal122019.pdf>.

Young Adults with Autism and Epilepsy

Uploaded by: Lisa Wiederlight

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony in Support of HB 660: The Student Job Reformation Act
Presented to the Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Provided by Lisa Wiederlight, M.P.P./Parent of a Young Adult with Autism and Epilepsy in
Baltimore County
March 23, 2022**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my written testimony on this important legislation. I am respectfully requesting your support of this bill to give disabled Marylanders the best chance to use their skills and determination to become the most independent and productive members of our society that they can be.

The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) has a critical function. According to its website, the Division "helps people with physical, emotional, intellectual, developmental, sensory, and learning disabilities to go to work and keep their jobs by providing services such as career assessment and counseling, assistive technology, job training, higher education, and job placement."

Given that people with disabilities usually have a much higher rate of unemployment than those without disabilities, this organization has significant opportunities for improving the economic, social, and emotional well-being of Marylanders with disabilities. By way of example, research from Drexel University found that up to 80 percent of people with autism are under or unemployed. I know from personal experience that people living with autism can absolutely be employed and successful in the workplace.

Do we know how well DORS serves this important function? Has there been an evaluation of the expected versus realized outputs and outcomes from the Division?

My involvement as a DORS stakeholder began when my son was referred to its pre-employment training program during a school IEP meeting. He was about 16 years old. Understanding the need for my son to be included in the community while also receiving job training and socialization with others, I jumped at the chance.

I completed and sent back the mountain of paperwork.

I waited a few weeks patiently while wondering if I should follow up. When someone finally followed up with me., she told me she had a work opportunity doing clerical work at Sinai Hospital. "Hmmm, clerical work" I thought to myself. My son is an outside guy. He loves his volunteer time on a farm, and he enjoyed hanging out with a local college basketball team. I decided to give it a go, but had to clarify first with the caseworker, that my son also has epilepsy, and has a one-on-one aide at school. I'm pretty sure I wrote about that in the paperwork. The caseworker told me she was not sure if the opportunity could accommodate those needs, and that she would get back to me.

She didn't. I called twice and did not receive an answer.

The next communication I received from DORS was a letter essentially telling us that my son was being disenrolled from the program as a result of his lack of participation. My son (and those like him) deserve better than this.

I called back and talked with a supervisor, who told me that she would re-enroll him in the program, and that I would hear from a caseworker soon.

I didn't. And then, I gave up. If they can't even handle professional and necessary administrative paperwork, I wasn't going to trust them to address my son's special needs.

I then spoke with many other parents of children with special needs to see what they thought of DORS. All but one of the numerous parents with whom I spoke told me they had similar negative experiences

with DORS, and that I should not bother even thinking about using DORS to help my son. They told me as long as my son was on the DDA waiting list, that we would be fine.

Why are taxpayers funding an organization that is known by many of its stakeholders to be ineffective? Taking into account the importance of DORS' function, it is critical that the Maryland State Government review and dramatically improve DORS' operation by identifying its challenges and strengths, and then developing appropriate recommendations for improving its effectiveness in serving Marylanders with disabilities, and the businesses who employ them. We can do so much better than this.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation.

HB 660 - Favorable - Guyton (Senate).pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Guyton

Position: FAV

MICHELE GUYTON
Legislative District 42B
Baltimore County

Ways and Means Committee

Early Childhood Subcommittee

Education Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 23, 2022

SUPPORT - Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services (Student Job Training Reformation Act)

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

I am writing to request a favorable report for HB660 - The Division of Rehabilitative Services Reformation Act. DORS was established in its current form in 1992 and is housed in the Maryland State Department of Education, but has actually been around since 1929 as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

This is one of the longest lasting initiatives in State Government and has one of the most significant budgets (42% of the MSDE budget) and yet few lawmakers are aware of its existence, its mission or its struggles. DORS has been flying under the radar for a very long time.

The mission of DORS is to assist individuals with disabilities in pre-employment transition services and finding long-term employment.

One main problem with DORS is the inefficiency and extreme waits for services. The DORS 2020 Annual Report states that for that year, 6,124 people were on the waitlist, 318 (5%) moved from the waitlist. The level of disability is supposed to categorize clients into groups for services with three categories. The most significant disabilities are awarded services first while individuals who have been on the waitlist the longest are helped first. The third category, those with "non-severe disabilities," (and who may actually require fewer services to be independently employed are not ever expected to receive services due to the long waitlist. This means that so many individuals who should be eligible are not able to benefit from a rehabilitation program, and are left without these resources.

Another very serious concern is that during the last yearly report, DORS was graduated only 925 individuals to full-time employment and was being funded at a whopping \$352,966.80. That adds up to \$380,588 for EACH client who was successful achieving employment. I do not believe that anyone on this committee will consider this an acceptable return on investment.

The solution that I bring with HB660 is to bring stakeholders to the table to study and make recommendations on many of the primary concerns that have been brought to me by advocates and consumers.

Thank you for your support of HB660. I am aware of several amendments being suggested today and will accept them as friendly amendments.

Sincerely,

Delegate Michele Guyton D42B

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delegate Michele Guyton".

HB660_The Arc.POG_SWA.Senate. docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Ande Kolp

Position: FWA



**HB 660: Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Position: Support with Amendments**

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. People on the Go is the statewide advocacy organization operated by and for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). Both organizations have a vested interest in the success of people with IDD in the workplace and as such, we support House Bill 660 with what we consider to be friendly amendments. HB660 would create a Commission to study and evaluate the operation of the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS). This comprehensive review is very much needed.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is Maryland's vocational rehabilitation program, and it has a critical role in the lives of people with IDD who want to get or keep a job. Unfortunately, there have been long-standing issues with the capacity of DORS to serve: many students and adults with disabilities are not able to access services from DORS in a timely manner, if they are able to access them at all due to the long wait list for services, historic problems with DORS staffing, and lack of follow up.

Because DORS is not available to many who need it, - including transitioning youth preparing to exit high school- and because the quality of transition services vary significantly across the state, many students with disabilities throughout the state are left without needed support when they leave high school; ill-prepared for independent work and life after school exit. Additionally, students in more rural and remote areas of the state have fewer opportunities for DORS services that should be available to them.

To ensure issues are thoroughly analyzed so appropriate recommendations to improve DORS may be made, **we recommend the following amendments to the bill:**

Under Commission Membership, add:

- **Maryland Department of Disabilities** as a required member of the Commission- to ensure a broad perspective on the needs of people with disabilities in vocational rehabilitation.
- **People on the Go of Maryland** as a required member of the Commission- to ensure people with developmental disabilities who use the service are at the table.

**Under section (f) The Commission shall evaluate and make recommendations on:
add "evaluate and make recommendations on the effectiveness of the Workforce Technology Center, with consideration given to ensuring inclusive work-based experiences."**

The goal of this Commission should be to develop plans that will ensure people with disabilities are receiving the services and supports they need to work and thrive and that DORS has the capacity to make this happen. We agree that the commission should review the funding and placement of DORS in state government, to ensure there are commitments and a change to the structure and oversight needed for its success.

Please contact: Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland, email: akolp@thearcmd.org
Ken Capone, Executive Director, People on the Go of Maryland, email: ken@pogmd.org

EACtestimony.HB660Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Leslie Margolis

Position: FWA

Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HB 660: Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services (Student Job Training Reformation Act)

March 23, 2022

Position: Support with Amendment

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of approximately 40 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland, supports House Bill 660, which would create a Commission to study and evaluate the operation of the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS). This effort is much needed, as many students with disabilities are not able to access, or are not able to easily access, services from DORS.

Currently, DORS serves individuals with disabilities through a process known as "order of selection;" and only individuals with the most significant disabilities who require support to obtain or maintain employment are able to get services immediately. Individuals with "significant" disabilities are currently added to a waiting list, and individuals with "non-severe" disabilities are informed by the DORS website that "DORS does not expect to provide services to eligible individuals with "non-severe disabilities" (Category 3) in the foreseeable future." On its website, DORS attributes its decision to implement "order of selection" on the growth of the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program: "As a result of the tremendous growth of Pre-ETS since 2014, DORS has had to shift staff from the VR [vocational rehabilitation] program to the Pre-ETS program. As such, we no longer have the human resources available to manage both programs." Although DORS' Pre-ETS are supposed to better prepare students in high school for transition and for employment, these services are not robust enough. Because full DORS services are not available to most students following graduation, and because the quality of transition services is so variable across the state, many students with disabilities throughout the state who don't have the most significant disabilities are left in a void when they leave high school, prepared for neither employment nor other post-secondary options and left without the supports they need to be able to access those opportunities. Additionally, graduates with disabilities in more rural and remote areas of the state have fewer opportunities available to them.

The EAC appreciates that House Bill 660 would require a comprehensive evaluation of DORS and its services and strongly supports the bill with two amendments: First, that the Maryland Department of Disabilities should be added as a required member of the Commission, and second, that included in the responsibilities of the Commission shall be the responsibility to evaluate and make recommendations on "ways to enhance the capacity of DORS to serve more people, including a thorough review of the Workforce Technology Center, and ways to provide more inclusive work-based experiences."

Please contact Leslie Seid Margolis, chairperson, at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 410-370-5730 with questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Almazan, Selene Almazan Law, LLC

Rene Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents' Place of Maryland

Linda Barton, MSED, Education Advocate

Beth Benevides, Howard County Autism Society

Ellen Callegary, Law Offices of Ellen A. Callegary, P.A.

Rich Ceruolo, Parent Advocacy Consortium

Michelle Davis, ABCs for Life Success

Ann Geddes, Maryland Coalition of Families

Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course

Kalman Hettleman, Independent Advocate

Morgan Durand Horvath, M.Ed., Abilities Network

Rosemary Kitzinger and Marjorie Guldán, Bright Futures, LLC

Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland

Maria Ott, Attorney

Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism

Jaime Seaton, BGS Law

Karleen Spitulnik, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

Ronnetta Stanley, M.Ed., Loud Voices Together

Wayne Steedman, Steedman Law Group

Maureen van Stone, Mallory Legg, and Alyssa Thorn, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger Institute

DRMsenatetestimony.HB660.pdf

Uploaded by: Megan Jones

Position: FWA

SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
HB 660: Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services (Student Job Training
Reformation Act)

March 23, 2022

Position: Support with Amendment

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the protection and advocacy organization for the state of Maryland; the mission of the organization, part of a national network of similar agencies, is to advocate for the legal rights of people with disabilities throughout the state. DRM's work encompasses individual cases and systemic advocacy. DRM has a long history of representing students with disabilities in special education matters, including older students who are preparing to transition out of the school system. DRM joins the Education Advocacy Coalition (EAC) in supporting House Bill 660 for the reasons stated in the EAC testimony, but submits separate testimony to address an additional issue.

The protection and advocacy system includes a number of federally-created programs; DRM houses all of those programs except for the Client Assistance Program (CAP), the protection and advocacy program for people who are dissatisfied with their vocational rehabilitation services. Although DRM used to house the CAP, the state of Maryland brought the program within state government more than 20 years ago, and the CAP program is now housed within DORS. DRM appreciates being included as a member of the Commission and would suggest that House Bill 660 be amended to include the CAP, DRM's sister protection and advocacy agency, as a member of the Commission.

Please reach out to Megan Jones at meganc@disabilityrightsmd.org or Leslie Seid Margolis at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 410-370-5730 with any questions.

HB660.DDCouncil.SWA.EHEA.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FWA



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

March 23, 2022

HB 660: Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is a statewide public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The DD Council is led by people with developmental disabilities and their families who establish priorities for our work. Our priorities include: 1) expanding opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to have jobs they want, in the community, alongside co-workers without disabilities, and 2) increasing support for community-based employment. To that end, we partner with people with disabilities, families, state agencies, policy makers, and others.

State vocational rehabilitation (VR) services programs, authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), provide services for people with disabilities to prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency. **The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is Maryland's VR program, and plays a critical role for people with disabilities who want to get or keep a job. Too many Marylanders with disabilities cannot access these services due to long wait lists and other barriers. A comprehensive review of DORS is needed, therefore we support HB 660.**

However, in order to ensure issues are thoroughly analyzed, and appropriate recommendations made, we recommend the following amendments that strengthen the Commission's purview:

- **Add the Maryland Department of Disabilities** as a required member of the Commission
- **Add that the Commission shall evaluate and make recommendations on "ways to enhance the capacity of DORS to serve more people, including a thorough review of the Workforce Technology Center, and ways to provide more inclusive work-based experiences."**

The goal of this Commission should be to ensure more people with disabilities get the services and supports they need, and those already receiving services get the breadth of support DORS offers to participate in the workforce. This includes building the capacity of DORS to provide efficient, effective services. To do this, DORS must be properly funded and positioned in state government in a way that maximizes its efficiency and effectiveness to provide services.

A primary example that the Commission should consider in its analysis is the Workforce Technology Center (WTC). WTC is a segregated center in Baltimore, and is not accessible to everyone. We know that there are more inclusive ways to deliver similar services and support. Exploring ways to reimagine the services provided at WTC could prove to be more cost effective, therefore it should be specifically added as an issue the Commission evaluates.

People with disabilities need access to the critical services provided by DORS, and the Commission's work and recommendations will help move Maryland forward to increase quality and access of the programs they offer.

For these reasons, the DD Council supports HB 660 with the amendments outlined above.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director: RLondon@md-council.org

217 E. Redwood Street, Suite 1300 • Baltimore, MD 21202 • 410.767.3670 • md-council.org

Kalani Brown, *Chairperson* • Rachel London, Esq., *Executive Director*

HB 660 - SWA - Commission to Study the Division of

Uploaded by: Yousuf Ahmad

Position: FWA

HB660_MDOD_LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Hall

Position: INFO

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary
Christian J. Miele, Deputy Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor



DATE: March 23, 2022

BILL: House Bill 660 - Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services (Student Job Training Reformation Act)

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

POSITION: Letter of Information

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 660 establishes the Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) to evaluate and make recommendations on improving the various aspects of the agency's programs and services. The proposed Commission's membership is broad and includes many of the key stakeholders in the disabilities community. The bill, as amended in the House, does not include representation from the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD), an important voice in this community.

MDOD is the only Cabinet-level Agency in the United States representing cross disability issues. Created by the Maryland General Assembly in 2004, MDOD is charged with coordinating and improving the delivery of disability services. Employment has been a cornerstone of MDOD's work from its inception.

MDOD has spent time researching and understanding the federal and state challenges facing state vocational rehabilitation programs. MDOD has also prepared a series of recommendations at the request of the State Superintendent of Schools to address the DORS wait list. Among the challenges facing DORS is the fact that the agency is nearly 80% federally funded, and recent changes as a result of the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) now require DORS to offer Pre-Employment Transition Services to a broader pool of eligible youth. This has created an entitlement without increased funding, resulting in more individuals being added to the waitlist.

MDOD has a director-level position dedicated to disability employment and secondary transition policy and is well positioned to add much to the work of the Commission should the department be represented as a member thereof.

If there are any questions, please contact MDOD's Director of Interagency Affairs, Elizabeth Hall, elizabeth.hall2@maryland.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary