

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