



**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.

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