



March 3, 2022

Testimony Opposing HB1121

Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards, and Registration Plates – Notation for Autism Spectrum

The Howard County Autism Society is submitting this testimony to express its concerns about this bill which would require the Motor Vehicle Administration to ensure that the driver's license, identification card, or registration plate of an applicant who indicates on a certain application that the applicant is on the Autism Spectrum includes a notation specifying that the applicant is on the Autism Spectrum. Additionally, it requires an application for a driver's license, an identification card, or a vehicle registration to allow an applicant to indicate that the applicant is on the Autism Spectrum.

While HCAS generally supports measures for people to voluntarily provide personal information, we believe this bill may have unintended consequences.

First, the information would be housed permanently in the system. Thus, if the adult wanted to change the designator a parent had placed on their record prior to 18, the individual would be unable to fully have the information expunged from their record.

Additionally, the "blue card" is essentially a blue piece of paper that people can fill out with information that says they have a disability and how it may impact them. The idea is that this blue card would be kept with a driver's license or registration and, in the event of an emergency, the person would show both their driver's license and the blue card. Unfortunately, the Maryland "blue card" that was enacted two years ago has been ineffective, and, it is our understanding that some MVA locations are not aware of what the blue card is.

One thought is to strengthen the blue card since this solution does not seem to be easily found on the MVA website. Other states have a "blue envelope" where a driver puts their license and registration before handing it to an officer. This way it immediately identifies them as a driver with autism. Could this be an approach Maryland takes?

There may be other ways in which to improve the bill; however, as it now reads, we urge you to withdraw the bill.