

# **CFenderson-HB1121 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Crystal Fenderson

Position: FAV

The Honorable Rachel Jones  
206 Lowe House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

March 1, 2022

Dear Delegates R. Jones, Brooks, Foley, Hill, Patterson, and Proctor,

I am writing to urge you to pass the HB 1121, Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards, and Registration Plates – Notation for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Countless studies show autism prevalence in the United States has increased significantly, making autism awareness, education, and acceptance critical. The stigmas associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder create disparity that cause individuals living with the disorder to be overlooked and misrepresented. Individuals living with autism may exhibit non-threatening behaviors such as: pacing, talking to oneself, not making eye contact, have extremely delayed responses, exhibit avoidance, or may walk away. In some cases, the individual may even be nonverbal. As a result, they are misunderstood and are at a higher risk of being hurt or victimized.

Now more than ever, it is important for individuals living with autism to be able to safely live, work, and function independently within their communities. Notation for Autism Spectrum Disorder on driver's licenses, identification cards, and vehicle registration plates will help to ensure the safety of individuals living on the spectrum. Law enforcement officers, first responders, community workers, and citizens will have the ability to quickly identify persons on the spectrum through these notations, which may significantly decrease the potential of fatalities.

As an advocate of the autism community, safety is a critical concern. I know how important it is for individuals with autism to be included, to live independently, and to be protected from harm. This bill is a simple solution that not only helps to communicate a medical and/or special need, but also creates awareness.

As the mother of (2) autistic pre-teens, who may become a licensed driver's one day, I ask that you pass this important legislation. Thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,  
Parent of (2) pre-teens on the spectrum  
Crystal Fenderson  
3803 Chapel Forge Drive  
Bowie, MD 20715  
crystalhenderson@gmail.com

**HB1121- written testimony- LRW 2.28.2022.pdf**

Uploaded by: LaTonya Ward

Position: FAV

The Honorable Rachel Jones  
206 Lowe House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

March 1, 2022

Dear Delegates R. Jones, Brooks, Foley, Hill, Patterson, and Proctor,

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Countless studies show autism prevalence in the United States has increased significantly, making autism awareness, education, and acceptance critical. The stigmas associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder create disparity that cause individuals living with the disorder to be overlooked and misrepresented. Individuals living with autism may exhibit non-threatening behaviors such as: pacing, talking to oneself, not making eye contact, have extremely delayed-responses, exhibit avoidance, or may walk away. In some cases, the individual may even be non-verbal. As a result, they are misunderstood and are at a higher risk of being hurt or victimized.

Now more than ever, it is important for individuals living with autism to be able to safely live, work, and function independently within their communities.

Notation for Autism Spectrum Disorder on driver's licenses, identification cards, and vehicle registration plates will help to ensure the safety of individuals living on the spectrum. Law enforcement officers, first responders, community workers, and citizens will have the ability to quickly identify persons on the spectrum through these notations, which may significantly decrease the potential of fatalities.

As an advocate of the autism community, safety is a critical concern. I know how important it is for individuals with autism to be included, to live independently, and to be protected from harm. This bill is a simple solution that not only helps to communicate a medical and/or special need, but also creates awareness.

As the mother of an autistic teen, who may become a licensed driver one day, I ask that you pass this important legislation. Thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,  
LaTonya Ward  
Parent of a teen on the spectrum  
6937 Halleck Street  
District Heights, MD 20747  
Lrw.ward@gmail.com



**WrittenTestimony\_HB1121\_PauletteLewis.pdf**

Uploaded by: Paulette Lewis

Position: FAV

The Honorable Rachel Jones  
206 Lowe House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

March 1, 2022

Dear Delegates R. Jones, Brooks, Foley, Hill, Patterson, and Proctor,

I write this correspondence to urge you to pass the HB 1121, Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards, and Registration Plates – Notation for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Countless studies show autism prevalence in the United States has increased significantly, making autism awareness, education, and acceptance critical. The stigmas associated with autism spectrum disorder create disparity that cause individuals living with the disorder to be overlooked and misrepresented. Individuals living with autism may exhibit non-threatening behaviors such as: pacing, talking to oneself, not making eye contact, have extremely delayed-responses, exhibit avoidance, or may walk away. In some cases, the individual may even be non-verbal. As a result, they are misunderstood and are at a higher risk of being hurt or victimized.

Now more than ever, it is important for individuals living with autism to be able to safely live, work, and function independently within their communities.

Notation for Autism Spectrum Disorder on driver's licenses, identification cards, and vehicle registration plates will help to ensure the safety of individuals living on the spectrum. Law enforcement officers, first responders, community workers, and citizens will have the ability to quickly identify persons on the spectrum through these notations, which may significantly decrease the potential of fatalities.

As a mother of a 9-year-old son who is on the spectrum, safety is a critical concern. I know how important it is for him and other individuals with autism to be included, to live independently, and to be protected from harm. This bill is a simple solution that not only helps to communicate a medical and/or special need, but also creates awareness.

I ask that you pass this important legislation. Thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,

Paulette Lewis  
Parent of a child on the spectrum  
9121 Helaine Hamlet Way  
Columbia, Maryland 21045  
paulette.lewiszpb@gmail.com

# **HB1121\_Developmental Disabilities Coalition\_Oppose**

Uploaded by: Ande Kolp

Position: UNF





## MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

### HB1121 - Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards, and Registration Plates – Notation for Autism Spectrum House Environment and Transportation Committee March 3, 2022

**Position: Oppose**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

This bill would require an application for a driver's license, ID card, and registration plates through the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to include a notation that the applicant is on the autism spectrum. While the bill is well-intended, and we understand some people want this in order to protect people who self-identify as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), **we believe the designation would create unintended consequences for people with ASD whether they decide to indicate their disability or not. If they do, it could impact their interactions with law enforcement, employers, the courts, and the general public. If they decline to indicate they are on the autism spectrum, it could also have implications especially when they do have an interaction with police or another first responder.** We believe that training for first responders and community awareness of trauma informed care are most effective for supporting first responders in their interactions with people with IDD.

A few county police departments have taken the lead in Maryland to train officers how to respond to a call involving someone who may have an IDD. For example, Montgomery County police have a specialized unit devoted to preparing officers to recognize signs that someone might have autism.<sup>i</sup> The Montgomery County police Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Alzheimer's and Dementia Outreach Unit helps prepare people with autism and their caregivers for safe interactions with police. The Howard County Police Department regularly receives training and education about ASD through a partnership with the Howard County Autism Society<sup>ii</sup> and there is a robust statewide initiative to train and prepare first responders for interactions with people with IDD.

In 2015, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to create the **Ethan Saylor Alliance (ESA) for Self Advocates As Educators.**<sup>iii</sup> The ESA provides training for members of law enforcement and other public service entities on specific needs of those with developmental and intellectual disabilities.<sup>iv</sup> Under the ESA, self-advocates take the central role in educating and informing the community in regard to the specific needs of those with disabilities. To date, thousands of first responders have been trained through



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1500 Union Avenue  
Suite 2000  
Baltimore, MD 21211



8835 Columbia 100 Pky  
Suite P  
Columbia, MD 21044



**Maryland Developmental  
Disabilities Council**  
CREATING CHANGE · IMPROVING LIVES

217 E Redwood Street  
Suite 1300  
Baltimore, MD 21202



7000 Tudsbury Road  
Windsor Mill, MD 21244

the efforts of the Ethan Saylor Alliance to safely and supportively interact with people with disabilities, including people who may have ASD.<sup>v</sup>

**In 2020, the Maryland General Assembly passed SB885/HB1118 (Ch. 427) to require the Maryland MVA to provide voluntary Developmental Disability Self-Disclosure Cards.<sup>vi</sup> These cards may be used by someone with ASD or other developmental disability to self-disclose a disability to police. The cards are kept with a person's registration and driver's license. On one side of the card, the person with disabilities can include information about his/her/their disability, how they communicate, and any other pertinent information to share with law enforcement personnel. The cards are designed to signal to officers that the driver has a disability and that they may need to communicate differently. The color "blue" is the nationally recognized color for autism awareness. Although not everyone who discloses a disability will have autism, this color helps the card stand out, and make it easier for members of law enforcement to identify the voluntary disability disclosure document. The MVA now has these cards available upon request.<sup>vii</sup>**

**Nothing in either of these laws requires the creation of an electronic record of the voluntary disability disclosure as HB1121 would do. We are concerned about the government collecting information about a person's disability, including how long the information would be stored even after a person decides to remove the notation/designation. That protection is very important to the DD Coalition. We worked very closely with the General Assembly in 2020 to make sure the self-disclosure card preserved the rights of the person, avoided stigma, protected people from targeted victimization, and protected those who do not self-identify to be treated with the same compassion and understanding as other citizens.**

We believe the self-disclosure card helps people with developmental disabilities, including ASD, and results in better outcomes in police encounters. Since those exist, and because HB 1121 does not address our concerns, we cannot support this legislation.

For more information, please contact:  
Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland  
[akolp@theardmd.org](mailto:akolp@theardmd.org)

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/howdoI/autism-alzheimer-outreach.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://bizmonthly.com/hcpd-recruit-class-partners-with-autism-society/>

<sup>iii</sup> [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2015RS/chapters\\_noln/Ch\\_387\\_sb0853T.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2015RS/chapters_noln/Ch_387_sb0853T.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> <http://mdod.maryland.gov/about/Pages/Saylor-Alliance.aspx>

<sup>v</sup> <http://mdod.maryland.gov/about/Documents/LEAD%2020-21%20Final%20Report.pdf>, pages 13-18 for goals and outcomes from 20-21 training year.

<sup>vi</sup> [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2020RS/Chapters\\_noln/CH\\_427\\_hb1118t.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2020RS/Chapters_noln/CH_427_hb1118t.pdf)



# **HB1121 Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards, and**

Uploaded by: Melissa Rosenberg

Position: UNF



**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.

# **HB1121 Notation on Drivers lic Autism testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tami Goldsmith

Position: UNF



**Testimony in Opposition**

**HB1121 Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards, and Registration Plates – Notation for Autism Spectrum**

**Environment and Transportation**

**March 3, 2022**

**By Ken Capone**

**Background: People On the Go Maryland builds community through diversity and inclusion. We respect the individuality of our members and are committed to making inclusion a priority so that everyone feels comfortable, valued, and heard. People On the Go remains distinct by maintaining a cross-disability strategy that focuses on effecting positive change in the lives of people with and without disabilities.**

**We are here to testify in opposition of HB1121 Driver's Licenses, Identification Cards, and Registration Plates – Notation for Autism Spectrum for many reasons.**

**People On the Go has a membership of over 400 members across the state, and many are on the autism spectrum. We feel that this bill could have negative implications on people with autism. This bill doesn't just cover having a notation on your identification, but it also is creating a silo of one developmental disability over another. The disability community compromised on Senator Zucker's bill 2 years ago to give the MVA the resources to print a card that a person with a disability could keep on them or in their vehicle if they so choose to identify as a person with a disability.**

**HB 1121 can be an invasion of privacy. For example, some people with autism might only want certain people to know that they are on the spectrum and by putting a notation on one's driver license allows many people to know that a person is on the spectrum.**

**Will someone's vehicle insurance go up, or will the person even be able to get insurance if the insurance company knows that the person who is trying to get insurance is on the spectrum.**

**For safety reasons we oppose this legislation because if a person with a notation on his license/I.d. card needs to show their I.D. card to buy something, a stranger could see the notation on their I.D. Card and might think the person is an easy target for a crime.**

**Many organizations that support individuals and their families have developed tools to assist people with autism or other disabilities to self-disclose safely without having to do it on their state ID, driver's license.**

**We need more focus on the Ethan Saylor Alliance on Law Enforcement training to recognize if somebody is on the spectrum, having mental health issues, or even if somebody has a disability and is having a seizure and more.**

**For these reasons we oppose HB1121.**



# **HB1121 - MVA - Notation for Autism Spectrum - LOI\_**

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

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March 3, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 1121 – Driver’s Licenses, Identification Cards, and Registration Plates – Notation for Autism Spectrum***

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1121 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

House Bill 1121 would require the MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA) to provide a notated registration tag to applicants who disclose that they are on the Autism Spectrum and indicate this information on the applicant’s identification card or driver’s license.

To maintain driver safety, the MDOT MVA has established a list of medical conditions in COMAR that must be reported to the MDOT MVA and is reviewed by the Medical Advisory Board (MAB). Included on that list is any mental health condition that would impact the ability to drive; depending on the severity of an individual’s symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder, they may be required to disclose this information to the MDOT MVA. How the MDOT MVA then proceeds depends on the physical and mental manifestations of each individual customer and what restriction(s) or action(s) may need to be taken. As a result of disclosures made by applicants to the MDOT MVA under House Bill 1121, additional individuals may need to be reviewed by the MAB.

Currently, the MDOT MVA provides upon request a Developmental Disability Disclosure Card, a blue card the size of a driver's license that includes space for an individual to provide details of a developmental disability and gives guidance on effective communication between law enforcement officers and those with developmental disabilities. To obtain a voluntary Developmental Disability Disclosure Card, customers can visit the information desk at any of MDOT MVA’s 24 branches statewide during normal business hours. The MDOT MVA does not require that customers, parents, or guardians to disclose or present documentation of a disability to obtain this card. Law enforcement has been provided training on the Developmental Disability Disclosure Card and how to best engage with the driver when presented with the card.

House Bill 1121 also requires a notation on a registration tag. This would not be removeable and may cause confusion if another individual is operating the vehicle and is stopped by law enforcement. Other states, such as Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, offer drivers who are deaf or hard of hearing a visor card.

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Page Two

While registration tags are permanently affixed to a vehicle regardless of the driver, visor cards can be stored or affixed to a vehicle's sun visor and provided to law enforcement officials during a traffic stop, offering flexibility of use by the operator.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1121.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer  
Administrator  
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration  
410-787-7830

Pilar Helm  
Director of Government Affairs  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
410-865-1090