

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 559 – Supported Decision-Making
February 17, 2022
Position: Support

Self-Directed Advocacy Network of Maryland, Inc. wholeheartedly endorses SB 559 Supported Decision-Making (SDM) Bill.

SDM is a welcome tool to help those with I/DD make their choices clear and respected without the often-onerous restrictions of a guardian or appointing a power of attorney.

In fact, SDM is a concept embodied in the idea of self-direction and person-centered planning - allowing a person to make their own decision with support is what we all need. We all rely on experts, friends and family to help us form our decisions. This bill helps to codify and provide structure to this concept.

Many in the disability community have been pushed into guardianships that may be more restrictive than is necessary. With the addition of SDM option there is a wider array of choices and a greater likelihood that a person can maintain more control and choice over day to day decisions.

Note especially:

- This bill was created with much input from Maryland’s Cross-Disability SDM Coalition, (over 27 partners), including representation from state agencies, the courts, advocacy groups, self-advocates and family members, and others across the disability and aging communities.
- Supported decision-making is a nationally and internationally recognized best practice that helps preserve a person’s right to make their own decision by recognizing that just like people without disabilities, people with disabilities rely on “supporters” the people who they trust to help them make, communicate, and effectuate their decisions.