



DATE: February 17, 2022 **COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings
BILL NO: Senate Bill 559
BILL TITLE: Supported Decision-Making
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Senate Bill 559 – Supported Decision Making

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 559 would formalize supported decision-making agreements. Supported Decision-Making is a tool where individuals with disabilities can make their own choices, with support.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute provides specialized services to patients nationally and internationally. Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based and community-based programs.

The Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute is proud to be Maryland's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) and a member of the national Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD).

MCDD links the community to vital services, research and information to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Our mission is to provide leadership that advances the inclusion of people with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities through preservice preparation and training; research and evaluation; community service and technical assistance; and information dissemination.

Rationale:

Supported Decision-making is a process of supporting and accommodating a person so that they can make, communicate, and effectuate life decisions in accordance with their preferences and right to self-determination. This tool allows anyone, but especially a person with disabilities, to retain their decision-making capacity by selecting people who they trust to assist them with making and communicating their will, choices, and opinions.

Supported Decision-Making respects individuals with disabilities voices and choices. This process establishes independence, so that individuals with disabilities have a support system when making informed decisions about their life. In addition, individuals with disabilities develop self-advocacy and decision making skills.

Supported Decision-making is a nationally-recognized best practice that preserves the civil rights of people with disabilities by providing an alternative for guardianship and is endorsed by the American Bar Association, The American Civil Liberties Union, the Uniform Law Commission, and the United Nation's Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 559