



Central Chesapeake Region

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February 17, 2022

Chair William C. Smith, Jr.
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland State Senate
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of The Arc Central Chesapeake Region in SUPPORT of SB559 – *Estates and Trusts - Supported Decision Making*.

The Arc Central Chesapeake Region provides services and supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through living options, workforce development, and fiscal management services. Serving Anne Arundel County and the Eastern Shore of Maryland, The Arc provides an innovative, person-directed approach across the Arc of a person's life, focusing on equity and self-determination.

People with disabilities have continued to face inequalities in their ability to make personal decisions for themselves and choose a supported decision-maker in a time of need. SB559 creates the necessary provisions for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities to support making, communicating, and effectuating personal life decisions. We routinely encounter situations where hospitals refuse to perform medically necessary procedures unless a surrogate decision-maker or guardian is appointed. Recently, a hospital refused to perform a procedure to treat a wound infected with flesh-eating bacteria unless The Arc agreed to assume the surrogate decision-maker's role. SB559 would promote these opportunities.

We support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live the lives they choose by creating opportunities, promoting respect and equity, and providing access to services. The Arc asks for your support this session by voting in favor of SB559 and allowing adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to make the personal choice to enter into supported decision-making agreements.

Sincerely,

Jonathon Rondeau
President & CEO

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