



**HB 660: Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitative Services
House Ways and Means Committee
Position: Support with Amendments**

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. People on the Go is the statewide advocacy organization operated by and for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. **Both organizations have a vested interest in the success of people with IDD in the workplace and as such, we support House Bill 660 with what we consider to be friendly amendments.** HB660 would which would create a Commission to study and evaluate the operation of the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS). This comprehensive review is very much needed.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is Maryland's vocational rehabilitation program, and has a critical role in the lives of people with IDD who want to get or keep a job. Unfortunately, many students and adults with disabilities are not able to access services from DORS in a timely manner, if they are able to access them at all due to the long wait list for services, historic problems with DORS capacity and lack of follow up.

Because DORS is not available to many who need it, among them- transitioning youth preparing to exit high school- and because the quality of transition services vary across the state, many students with disabilities throughout the state are left without needed support when they leave high school; ill-prepared for independent life after school exit. Additionally, students in more rural and remote areas of the state have fewer opportunities available to them.

In order to ensure issues are thoroughly analyzed so appropriate recommendations to improve DORS may be made, we recommend the following amendments to the bill:

- **Add the Maryland Department of Disabilities** as a required member of the Commission- to ensure a broad perspective on the needs of people with disabilities in vocational rehabilitation.
- **Add People on the Go of Maryland** as a required member of the Commission- to ensure people with disabilities who use the service are at the table.
- **Add that one of the roles of the Commission shall be to evaluate and make recommendations on "ways to enhance the capacity of DORS to serve more people, including a thorough review of the Workforce Technology Center, and ways to provide more inclusive work-based experiences.**

The goal of this Commission should be to develop plans that will ensure people with disabilities are receiving the services and supports they need to work and thrive and that DORS has the capacity to make this happen. The commission should review the funding and placement of DORS in state government to ensure there are commitments and a change to the structure and oversight needed for its success.

Please contact: Mat Rice, Director of Public Policy, The Arc Maryland, email: mrice@thearcmd.org
Ken Capone, Executive Director, People on the Go of Maryland, email: ken@pogmd.org