



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

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

House Economic Matters Committee

SB555: Fair Wage Act of 2023

Position: Support



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Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046

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). As such, we are pleased to support this bill, which will help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities hire and retain staff who will support them as they build their lives in the community.



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We support the Fair Wage Act, as workers, including direct support professionals, need to earn a liveable wage. We applaud the Administration for addressing the need to accelerate the rate increases for IDD community providers as part of the effort to accelerate the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by January 1, 2024. The need for the rate increase acceleration is clear, and we are grateful to Governor Moore that these increases have already been included in the FY 2024 budget.



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Direct support professionals play a critical role in the direct care and support of people with developmental disabilities. They help people daily, and help make sure people with IDD live good lives. There are a lot of requirements for direct support professionals - they must pass training and accreditation requirements and be able to work independently, among other things. Direct support professional turnover is high. The most recent data in Maryland indicated that 1 in 3 direct support professionals don't stay in their jobs for six months, and over half don't stay a year. The vast majority leave voluntarily because of high stress, low-wage work; they can make as much if not more working for retailers or other private employers. **In order for there to be an adequate, quality supply of direct support professionals, these jobs must offer starting wages above the minimum wage.**



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council

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While we support this bill as amended by the Senate, we want to reiterate that in order to be consistent with legislation passed in 2014 and again in 2019 by the General Assembly, if there is a statutory requirement to increase the minimum wage, there must also be a statutory requirement to increase the rates for developmental disability services



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We appreciate your support for Marylanders with developmental disabilities, and strongly support the Fair Wage Act of 2023 as amended by the Senate.

For more information contact Laura Howell, Executive Director, Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) at lhowell@macsonline.org.