



## **HB489: Residential Service Agencies - Reimbursement - Personal Assistance Services**

Testimony of Maryland Centers for Independent Living

### **SUPPORT**

Senate Finance Committee, March 29, 2023

The seven Centers for Independent Living (CIL) were established by federal law and work to ensure the civil rights and quality services of people with disabilities in Maryland. Centers for Independent Living are nonprofit disability resource and advocacy organizations located throughout Maryland operated by and for people with disabilities. CIL staff and Boards are at least 51% people with disabilities. We are part of a nationwide network which provides Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services.

Many, many of us depend on personal assistance services to support our activities of daily living and to live safely and fully in our communities. We know our personal care assistants (PCAs) well. And we know how essential they are to our well-being. We depend on a strong PCA workforce.

The shortage of PCAs has been acutely felt in our community. When we have been left without PCAs, we have been left to struggle. Sometimes we have been left unable to transfer our bodies from a wheelchair into our beds or to our washrooms. We have been left unable to get our meals and even our medicines. PCAs offer care for us in the most personal and intimate manner. They may assist us to shop or attend community functions. During the pandemic PCAs have been essential workers.

We depend on PCAs and how they show up for us. They have our support for receiving the job benefits they deserve. A stronger work force, with better protections is better for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration and anticipated support.

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