

**Maryland State Senate  
Finance Committee**

**Written Testimony of Lisa Wiederlight  
March 22, 2023**

**In Support of: Division of Rehabilitation Services and Developmental Disabilities  
Administration - Memorandum of Understanding**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill today. I am a member of the Maryland Autism Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs, but first I am the mother of a young adult with autism and co-occurring conditions in Montgomery County.

This bill is important because it will help to reduce gaps in services when a person with a disability leaves high school and adult services begin. In some cases, this can be many months. Just like many of us, people with disabilities, specifically people with autism, (which is currently estimated to be at least 1 of every 44 twelve year-olds in Maryland), need consistency and structure in their lives. Further, peer-reviewed research has shown that people on autism have, on average, four co-occurring conditions which may require accommodations for them to be included in the community. These conditions include gastrointestinal disease, seizure disorders, wandering behaviors, and anxiety/depression. If services are disrupted, this could result in self-injurious behavior, aggressive behavior toward others, and/or worsening anxiety/depression. This bill seems like a very humane and effective way to serve our Marylanders with disabilities.

The December 2022 *Interim Report* from the Commission to Study DORS specifically recommended a memorandum of understanding with DDA that will enable DORS to access the necessary medical, psychological, or school documentation of DDA applicants who are seeking DORS services to expedite the eligibility process by DORS. I respectfully ask that you support this bill without reservation. Thank you for your time and consideration.