

# Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

**HOUSE HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

**HOUSE BILL 290: PUBLIC HEALTH—DENTAL SERVICES--ACCESS**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 14, 2023**

**POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of nearly 40 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland provides this letter of information regarding House Bill 290, which would increase access to dental care for children throughout Maryland while at the same time requiring parents to provide periodic evidence of dental screening to their child's school or child care center.

House Bill 290 could potentially have the unintended consequence of causing some children to be excluded from school or child care:

- 1) Children with disabilities: Some children with disabilities have significant sensory or behavior challenges that make them unable to tolerate routine dental care. These children may require sedation for routine dental care, making dental screening an onerous and major medical procedure. Some children have a constellation of disabilities that makes sedation unsafe. Additionally, many parents of children with disabilities have great difficulty finding dentists who are willing to treat their children. If dental screening is a prerequisite for school or child care attendance, these children—children who need special education and related services and are guaranteed those services by law—would be excluded from school.
- 2) Children whose legal status makes them ineligible for Medical Assistance: All children, regardless of their legal status, have a right to attend school. However, some children may not be at a point in the immigration process at which they have access to Medicaid. House Bill 290 presupposes that children will be eligible for Medicaid or otherwise have dental insurance. If children are unable to access a dental screening because they do not have dental insurance or Medicaid, they will be excluded from school if dental screening is a prerequisite for school attendance.
- 3) Both of these issues could be addressed by an amendment stating that children cannot be excluded from school if they are unable to access dental screening because of disability or lack of insurance.

Please contact Leslie Seid Margolis, Chairperson, at [lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org](mailto:lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org) or 410-370-5730 with any questions. (Over)

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Almazan, Selene Almazan Law, LLC

Rene Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents' Place of Maryland

Linda Barton, MSED, Education Advocate

Beth Benevides, Howard County Autism Society

Rich Ceruolo, Parent Advocacy Consortium

Michelle Davis, ABCs for Life Success

Jennifer Engel Fisher, Weinfeld Education Group

Lisa Frank, Andrea Bennett, Jen Ritchotte and Amy Tonti, Special Kids Company

Ann Geddes, Maryland Coalition of Families

Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course, LLC

Kalman Hettleman, Independent Advocate

Morgan Durand Horvath, M.Ed., Abilities Network

Nicole Joseph, Esq., Law Offices of Nicole Joseph

Ande Kolp, The Arc Maryland

Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland

Mark B. Martin, Law Offices of Mark B. Martin, P.A.

Ellen O'Neill, Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center

Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

Maria Ott, Attorney

Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism

Jaime Seaton, BGL Law

Karleen Spitulnik and Winifred Winston, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

Ronnetta Stanley, Loud Voices Together

Wayne Steedman, Steedman Law Group, LLC

Maureen van Stone, Annie Carver and Tyler Cochran, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger Institute

Jessica Williams, Education Due Process Solutions, LLC

Liz Zogby, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition