



DATE: March 28, 2023

BILL: SB732: Department of Disabilities – State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Maryland Commission on Disabilities – Alterations

COMMITTEE: House Health and Government Operations Committee

POSITION: Favorable

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support as favorable with amendments for **Senate Bill 732: Department of Disabilities-Maryland Commission on Disabilities-Membership**.

The Maryland Commission on Disabilities (MCOB) is MDOD's statutory board and advises MDOD on its departmental duties as the principal unit of State government responsible for developing, maintaining, revising, and enforcing statewide disability policies and standards throughout the units of State government. To ensure the MCOB reflects MDOD's constituents, there are several designated Governor appointed slots for disability representation such as physical disability, mental illness, Deaf, Blind, developmental and intellectual disability. A disability not currently represented is traumatic brain injury.

SB 732 amends the MCOB membership section of the Maryland Statute [Md. Human Services Code Ann. § 7-120](#) to include traumatic brain injury. Traumatic brain injury representation in Maryland currently has the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board under Maryland Department of Health and MDOD is represented on the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board.

Adding a MCOB slot specifically for traumatic brain injury is intended to balance the state government disability and traumatic brain injury constituent representation. This will result in Maryland having both the existing MDOD representation on the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board and a traumatic brain injury constituent voice on the MCOB.

The additional amendments unanimously adopted by the Senate are designed to streamline an existing State initiative and to have the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs moved to MDOD. MDOD respectfully requests the House concur with the Senate and maintain the Senate adopted amendments in the same posture.

If you have any questions please contact Elizabeth Hall, Director of Interagency Affairs, (410)767-3652, elizabeth.hall2@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary