



Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 53

Testimony by Lorna-Mae Silcott Maryland SILC Secretary

House Government Operations, 02/14/2023

HB 53 puts the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) in statute which will allow the compliance with federal assurances and regulations to act as an independent agency of government.

The Statewide Independent Living Council, a majority of whose members are people with disabilities, in cooperation with Centers for Independent Living develops and monitors a cross-disability State Plan every three years to enhance service delivery throughout Maryland. The State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) for Maryland serves as a strategic plan to advance the independence and full inclusion of individuals with significant disabilities.

Currently the SILC receives \$139,000 in Federal funding through the Maryland Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) which acts as the Designated State Entity.

Because the SILC is not a free-standing entity, it cannot receive and expend funds or hire its own employees but must use DORS to expend funds and to hire personnel to carry out the work of the Maryland SILC. This situation doesn't allow for the independence outlined in Federal Assurances from the Administration for Community Living.

In closing, for the SILC to be effective and contribute meaningfully to the goals of advancing independence and inclusion, they need staff that can be supervised and directed by the SILC. Restructuring the organization of the SILC will allow them the ability to manage their own funds and costs the state nothing.

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