



HB 504
Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council - Establishment
Health and Government Operations Committee
February 24, 2023

Favorable

Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports HB 504 which would establish the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council as an independent unit of state government.

Inspired by the Gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. For 100 years, Catholic Charities has accompanied Marylanders as they age with dignity, obtain empowering careers, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success and feel welcome as immigrant neighbors. We recognize the important role the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council plays in creating the change necessary for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the supports that they need.

In 1977, Catholic Charities welcomed 13 children who had been living in a state institution to a residential facility on Pot Spring Road that would become the home of Gallagher Services. Our mission was clear – upholding every person’s dignity and opening doors to a fuller life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program grew quickly, more than tripling in size in its first year in response to local need. Today, we offer vocational training, supported employment, day habitation, community integration and independent living in nearly 50 homes throughout the Baltimore region.

Our programming could not have evolved without the steadfast work of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council. The Council has been a leader in advocating for, supporting and shaping the State’s commitment to inclusion. HB 504 is an important step in recognizing the independence of the Council. It will also streamline operations for the Council.

For the reasons listed above, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 504.

Submitted By: Regan Vaughan, Director of Advocacy