



HB657 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Employed Individuals With Disabilities - SUPPORT

Testimony of Maryland Centers for Independent Living

House Health and Government Operations Committee, February 28, 2023

The seven Centers for Independent Living (CIL) were established by federal law and work to ensure the civil rights and quality services of people with disabilities in Maryland. Centers for Independent Living are nonprofit disability resource and advocacy organizations located throughout Maryland operated by and for people with disabilities. CIL staff and Boards are at least 51% people with disabilities. We are part of a nationwide network which provides Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services.

The Centers for Independent Living are in support of HB 657. The objective of the bill is to give more opportunity for individuals with disabilities to utilize the state's Medicaid Buy-in. This opportunity allows individuals to work and maintain their Medicaid health insurance. The current Medicaid Buy-in program has opened so many doors for people with disabilities to work, earn wages and contribute more to their community.

We are in favor of providing any opportunity for more individuals to use the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) program. This bill eliminates counting of a spouse's assets and income for the individual to qualify for the program. Since the inception of the EID program, individuals accessing Medicaid through this path have not been able to get married if they choose because the income of a spouse would make them ineligible. This bill would prohibit that income or asset of a spouse being taken into consideration.

It also expands the age eligibility and allows for continued coverage if an individual is temporarily out of work. This is highly needed to allow for continued Medicaid services and access while changing jobs or recuperating from illness.

Passing this legislation supports people with disabilities across Maryland to gain employment and maintain their much needed health insurance and Medicaid services.

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