



February 20, 2023

Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD. 21401

In Support of HB 621 : MSDE - DORS programs – Open Cases Posted on MSDE / DORS Website

Members of the Maryland House Ways and Means Committee.

We are an organization of military and non-military families with over 1500 members. We fully support including ALL updates and efforts to increase the transparency around the inner workings of the state's DORS program.

The Department of Rehabilitation Services is supposed to prepare students with disabilities with life skills and work training so that they can become better skilled workers, in order to live more independent lives. But any parent or guardian that has had any interactions with DORS often walk away confused and frustrated by the inefficiency that is build into the system today.

We tried to get my own son into a drivers ed. class for children with disabilities and found out that the waiting list for training was more than 9 months long. He wanted to get his driver's license so that he could get a job and drive himself to school. The application process and long waits made it an option that he simply could not wait to explore with DORS. We were forced to look elsewhere for his training.

A case like ours if not something one might learn by looking at the MSDE DORS website. It's only after multiple phone calls and emails to staff that one can even learn that there is a driver's ed class, life skills and job skills training programs for teens and young adults. Increasing transparency around DORS can only help to improve the system by shining a light on the bottlenecks and inefficiencies inherent in doing things the "Old Way" and go a long way toward changing the mind set of, "but this is how things have always been done". The Blueprint for Maryland's Future demands we do better for all students and teens, not just some of them. In order to improve outcomes for all, we must weed out systemic issues and address them head on. And change our way of doing business, the business of educating and training all of our youth for 21st century careers.

Please support House Bill 621 and ask that the committee return a favorable report for this bill. Thank you for your time, and for considering our testimony today.

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Parent Advocacy Consortium:<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentAdvocacyConsortium>