

Oral Testimony
SB0362

Unfavorable

Karen Bowers LCSW-C
Thursday February 29, 2024

My name is Karen Bowers. I live in Hagerstown Md. My daughter Jennifer is 33 and has been self directing for the past 12 years following her exit from HS. Jennifer has multiple severe disabilities. Each plan year the waiver provides a budget for Jennifer based upon her needs which then allows her to be a part of her community and remain safe. The Self Direction Act of 2022 has been a god send for older parents like me as a path towards sustainability of Jennifer's self-directed services as I age or am no longer available to help her to manage the many details of her program. The ability to hire a Day-to-Day Administrator through IFDGS will allow Jen to continue to live in her own home with staffing and vendors who are providing person centered support designed by her team. We are currently interviewing to fill the Day-to-Day Administrative support position. This individual will manage Jens 7 employees by doing scheduling, tracking benefits, monitoring employee skills, coordination of education and training for our employees who are CMT certified, household management, scheduling with vendors, and other medical providers.

These are all tasks I currently perform without pay. Over the past twelve years Jen and her team of supports has developed a true person-centered program. When I am gone this will all end if the the availability of the Day-to-Day administrator is eliminated with an arbitrary \$5,000 cap of these funds proposed in BRFA. Other individualized services such as classes to help with behavior management goals and dental costs are available with these funds. I'd be happy to provide more details about how blocking access to IFDGS funds would be harmful to Jennifer.

Please:

Leave intact all provisions of The Self Direction Act of 2022. Instead of making changes to this Act through SB0362 I encourage you and your colleagues to institute a workgroup to study the utilization of funds in the DDA's Self Direction model as compared to the provider manager/traditional model.

Thank you,
Karen Bowers PARENT OF JENNIFER Bowers
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