



February 22, 2024

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
The Honorable Brian Feldman
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 597: Human Services - Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of The Arc Central Chesapeake Region in SUPPORT of SB597: Human Services - Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund. This legislation would provide more opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enjoy accessible boating, kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding.

At The Arc Central Chesapeake Region, we serve over 3,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in Anne Arundel County and Maryland's Eastern Shore. Our mission is to support people with disabilities to live the lives they choose by creating opportunities, promoting respect and equity, and providing access to services.

Many of the individuals we support have enjoyed sailing through Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating Therapeutic Sailing (CRAB) on the Chesapeake Bay. The experience provides a refreshing chapter in their spring and summer season, and the staff at CRAB has empowered the people we support by teaching them new skills and helping them gain more independence. The passage of this legislation will ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are granted the same opportunities as anyone else to engage in and feel a part of Maryland's robust water-sport culture.

The Arc is committed to creating inclusive communities with access to activities that make a difference in the lives of the people we support. For these reasons, we urge the Committee for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jonathon Rondeau'.

Jonathon Rondeau
President & CEO