MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
SB 597: Human Services - Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund
February 22, 2024
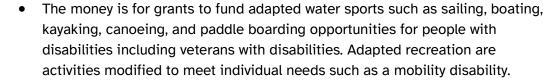**Position: Support with Amendments**

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Maryland

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Disability
Rights
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Maryland Developmental
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People
On the GO
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7000 Tudsbury Road
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The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. As such, the DD Coalition supports SB 597 with amendments.

WHAT does this legislation do?
- This bill creates the Individuals With Disabilities And Service–Disabled Veterans Boating Fund under the Maryland Department of Disabilities.
- The money is for grants to fund adapted water sports such as sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding opportunities for people with disabilities including veterans with disabilities. Adapted recreation are activities modified to meet individual needs such as a mobility disability.

WHAT do the proposed amendments do?
Together, all of these amendments expand access and opportunity to adapted water sports for people with disabilities.
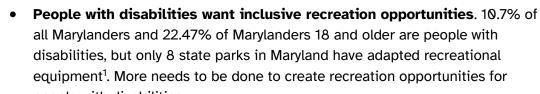- Replaces "Boating Fund" in the title with "Adapted Water Sports Funds."
- Replaces "Boating Fund" with "Adapted water sports fund" on page 2, line 14.
- Adds "surfing" to the list of adapted water sports on page 2, line 16 and page 3, line 10
- Removes "on the Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries at least 25 times in each of the past 3 years on page 3, line 26-27.

WHY is this legislation important?
- **Adapted recreation creates opportunity.** Adapted recreation allows people with disabilities to participate in sports and leisure activities with others. This allows everyone to have recreation opportunities regardless of their disability.
- **People with disabilities want inclusive recreation opportunities**. 10.7% of all Marylanders and 22.47% of Marylanders 18 and older are people with disabilities, but only 8 state parks in Maryland have adapted recreational equipment[1]. More needs to be done to create recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

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[1] https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/accessibleactivities.aspx?activity=AdaptiveRecreationEquipment