2-22-2024 Senate Testimony - Brendan Sailing.pdf Uploaded by: Derrick Cogburn

Position: FAV



February 22, 2024

Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
The Honorable Chair Brian Feldman
The Honorable Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 0597: Human Services – Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans

Boating Fund

Favorable Support

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, Senator Guzzone, our bill sponsor, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of Brendan Sailing, my name is Dr. Derrick Cogburn, and I am here today in full SUPPORT of SB0597. I have the pleasure of serving on the Board of Directors for Brendan Sailing, and I am also professor at American University, where I serve as the founding executive director of AU's Institute on Disability and Public Policy. I am an avid sailor and one of my personal goals is to involve more marginalized and underrepresented groups in sailing - especially children with neuro differences.

For the past 38 years, Brendan Sailing has been building pathways for self-confidence and personal growth for children with learning differences through individually tailored experiential instruction in sailing. Passage of this bill and its associated funding grants will help Brendan Sailing expand its reach in this specific community of children who often are overlooked for summer camp programs due to their learning differences and unique challenges for outdoor recreation and education.

Brendan Sailing believes sailing is not just a recreational activity, but a transformative experience that builds confidence, independence, social and teamwork skills. Our US Sailing certified instructors are trained in working with youth with Learning Differences such as ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, and Level One Autism. Operating out of both Annapolis and St. Mary's College of Maryland, we provide a supportive and inclusive environment where campers can thrive.

At Brendan Sailing, we have a policy that no child is turned away for lack of ability to pay for camp. Scholarships are available and over half our youth attend on scholarships. One hurdle of our program is funding for scholarships. Without adequate funding, we are limited in our ability to provide scholarships to those who need it most. This limits the impact we can make and the number of individuals we can reach. While we actively seek funding for scholarships through grants and donations, additional funding will enable us to reach more at-risk youth with learning differences in underserved populations that would not otherwise have these opportunities. Our 3:1 student to instructor ratio is vital to providing the attention and focus on the unique learning style of each student. This method is extremely effective and also more expensive than traditional camp structure.

Outdoor recreation and education opportunities are often hard to find for children with learning differences such as autism, anxiety, ADHD and other forms of neurodiversity. These opportunities are even more rare for overnight camping experiences. With additional support, we can expand our reach and provide more opportunities for at-risk youth to thrive and succeed.

In addition to sailing, campers participate in fun activities such as kayaking, paddle boarding and beach games. We also educate on marine science and environmental conservation, teaching campers the importance of protecting our Maryland waterways. Our instructors are trained in the Brendan Approach, a proven instructional method to reach this population. Brendan Sailing students' newly found confidence, expanded skills and new friendships extend far past their camp timeline. One student remarked once that the skills she learned through Brendan to navigate the waters and be aware of her surroundings and fellow sailors helped her obtain her driver's license and the independence this momentous occasion brings to young people.

Other students have similar comments. One camper remarked "I have friends now for the first time. I text with them throughout the year and can't wait to see them again next summer. Before I spent all my time playing Xbox and drawing by myself. "

Parents also articulate the transformation they see in their kids. "The changes in our son have been nothing short of amazing. This young man, so hesitant and shy, is now engaging with others, starts what

he finishes, and has successfully transitioned to colleges. This would not have been possible without the support of Brendan Sailing." – Parent of a 2023 Camper

"Brendan Sailing is a phenomenal program that my grandson attended the summer of 2023 at St Mary's College. Not only did he learn how to sail, he walked out with much more confidence in himself. The instructors, along with the volunteers, were always working with the campers and engaging them in every aspect. We have attended many camps, but Brendan Sailing tops them all. We hope to go back every year. Thank you for the great experience" – Maria Hall

"We had a fabulous experience with Brendan Sailing this summer. My daughter was able to thrive here in an environment that was designed for kids just like her. She was pushed out of her comfort zone in just the right ways and then supported by great coaches the whole time. Fabulous experience for her and the whole family." – Laura Smith

"This is, hands down, one of the best activities that my grandchildren have ever taken part in, and that is saying a lot! The staff and volunteers are dedicated, kind, and upbeat. They know kids and how to deal with them, moodiness and all! The kids now have a love of sailing that'll stay with them forever. They are confident and genuinely happy when they get to take friends and family out on the boat, all by themselves, at the end of each session! Please, support Brendan sailing, and by all means, send your children!" – Peggy Thompson

Instructors are also amazed at the power this program provides for the youth, as well as themselves.

Jodi Weinbecker, a long-time sailing instructor and facilitator of the Brendan Approach training for instructors, shares her experience teaching at Brendan Sailing the past two years: "After having coached and trained youth sailors from beginners to international competitors – I wish I would have had the opportunity to work with this program earlier in my career. I have always worked with kids with Learning Differences – I just didn't see the challenges from their perspective, so I never really coached or taught the child as a whole. These kids with learning differences just don't get opportunities like this!

"Sailing teaches independence, teamwork, multi-tasking, problem solving, dealing with adversity, overcoming fear, math, science, socializing, communicating, being in touch with the natural environment, disconnecting from technology, fear and joy, exhilarating and naturally calming all at the same time.

"Unlike any other sport I have ever played – and I have played most – the level of determination, self-confidence and overcoming obstacles that are required to make a sailboat go just does not compare to any other sport. Watching these kids who don't typically have great sport experiences, school experiences, or friend experiences come together as a group and bond is incredibly special to witness. Watching them learn the skills and gain the confidence to take their parents sailing at the end of the camp is truly heartwarming."

Volunteer and Sailing Instructor Dianne Sullivan, whose nephew has also been through the program, shares the following: "While I had been well acquainted and helped with the Brendan Sailing program in the past, never did the success and importance of the mission hit closer to home than when my autistic nephew attended the camp three summers ago. Prior to this, my nephew was most comfortable alone and in front of a computer screen. It was magical to see the transformation as he got outside all day every day for a full two weeks, learned skills and outdoor awareness that he had never experienced or thought of previously, accepted that he could be off his electronics and socially interactive without the world ending (I cannot stress how important that is for these kids!), and successfully conquered some fears. He felt empowered!

"Other Brendan campers I instructed similarly came to life as they became captains of their own boats, without full hands-on adult assistance, which is a big change for them; conquered fears of a boat capsizing; and mastered the understanding of how wind can fill sails and propels a boat. The campers themselves say how freeing and exciting it is to be out on the water, mastering boat handling, while also having fun! You'd just have to come to Parents' Day at the end of each session to see these students proudly take their parents sailing — it's truly something heartwarming to see!!"

On the Brendan Sailing website, <u>www.brendansailing.org</u>, you can watch a wonderful video from last summer's camps.

For these reasons, Brendan Sailing enthusiastically supports SB 0597 and urges a favorable report from the Committee.

KKI LOS .pdfUploaded by: Doug Silber
Position: FAV



A comprehensive resource for children with disabilities

December 11, 2023

To The Downtown Sailing Center:

I am writing to express my appreciation for our collaborative journey, which has already yielded remarkable results. Our partnership between the Kennedy Krieger Institute's virtual sailing simulator study and the Downtown Sailing Center embodies shared values and a commitment to enhancing accessibility and inclusivity in the world of sailing. I'm immensely satisfied with the positive impact we've collectively made on the lives of individuals in the Baltimore community.

The alignment of our initiatives has been nothing short of extraordinary. The introduction of the virtual sailing simulator, as part of my study, has provided individuals, especially those with spinal cord injuries, with a groundbreaking avenue to experience the wonders of sailing. This innovative approach perfectly complements the Downtown Sailing Center's mission to promote inclusivity and make sailing accessible to individuals of all abilities.

The outcomes of our collaboration have been nothing short of inspiring:

- 1. Enhanced Accessibility: The virtual sailing simulator has served as an exceptional tool to enhance accessibility. Individuals who may have faced barriers to traditional sailing experiences can now engage with sailing in a virtual environment, breaking down the barriers that once limited their participation.
- 2. <u>Skill Development</u>: Participants have been able to develop sailing skills and safety knowledge in a controlled and supportive setting. This has translated into increased confidence and readiness as they transition to real-life sailing experiences provided by the Downtown Sailing Center.
- 3. <u>Complementary Programs</u>: Our programs have seamlessly complemented each other. Participants have seamlessly transitioned from the virtual sailing simulator to the exhilaration of real-life sailing under the guidance of the Downtown Sailing Center, resulting in a holistic and enriching sailing experience.
- 4. <u>Research and Knowledge</u>: Our collaboration will continue to yield valuable research insights that benefit both organizations. The research conducted within the virtual sailing simulator study has informed best practices and enriched the programs offered by the Downtown Sailing Center.
- 5. <u>Community Engagement:</u> We have ignited a spark of enthusiasm for sailing within the community. The virtual sailing simulator study has generated interest and inspired individuals to explore the joys of sailing, leading to increased participation in the Downtown Sailing Center's programs. Including drawing a Doctoral Student from the University of Michigan to conduct a Pilot Study at the Downtown Sailing Center.
- 6. <u>Awareness and Support:</u> Our partnership has raised awareness about the importance of accessible sailing. It has attracted support from individuals and organizations who share our

commitment to promoting inclusivity and making recreational activities accessible to all.

I want to thank the Downtown Sailing Center team for their unwavering dedication and collaboration. The impact on Baltimore residents has been profound, and I eagerly anticipate our continued partnership. Our collaboration embodies the remarkable outcomes achievable through a shared vision. I look forward to the future, where we will undoubtedly continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for your commitment to inclusivity and the joy of sailing.

Albert Recio, MD, PT

Medical Director of Aquatic Therapy

13. ach 12-

Kennedy Krieger Institute

Assistant Professor of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

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Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 22, 2024

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 597 - First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Human Services – Individuals With Disabilities and Service–Disabled Veterans Boating

Fund

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

The agency supports the creation of the Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund.

One the agency's core objectives is to have diverse outdoor recreation opportunities for Maryland citizens and visitors.

Having a fund to provide grants for providing sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding opportunities for individuals with disabilities and service—disabled veterans adds support to programs that help citizens experience our State's great outdoor recreation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No similar bills have been proposed previously.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill creates the Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund.

The Arc_Fav Testimony_SB597.pdf Uploaded by: Gregory Snyder

Position: FAV



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,

Jonathon Rondeau President & CEO

The Arc_Fav Testimony_SB597.pdf Uploaded by: Gregory Snyder

Position: FAV



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

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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,

Jonathon Rondeau President & CEO

SB 597 - MDVA LOS.pdfUploaded by: Morgan Murphy Position: FAV



Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Secretary

WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR

ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY

February 22, 2024

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee 2 West, Miller Senate Office Building Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 597 - Human Services - Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund Position: Favorable with Amendments

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs ("MDVA") supports Senate Bill 597 - Human Services - Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund.

The MDVA supports the establishment of this fund to provide sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding opportunities for individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans.

We agree with the Department of Disabilities and suggest the following amendments to expand the program to include: (1) Nonprofits offering surfing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to be eligible for the grant funding, (2) Remove the mention of "Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries."

These amendments would allow the fund to promote adapted water activities more equitably across the state and beyond the Chesapeake Bay region. I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report with amendments to SB 597.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anthony C. Woods

Secretary

Testimony.2.22.24.pdfUploaded by: Paul Bollinger Position: FAV



Testimony of Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating (CRAB) Before the Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee February 22, 2024

Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, I am Paul Bollinger, President & CEO of Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating (CRAB) and I have been honored to serve in this position since 2016. CRAB has provided sailing instruction and boating for people with disabilities and recovering warriors for 33 years on Chesapeake Bay.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 0597, Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund. The importance of this Bill and what it will mean to thousands of people with disabilities and disabled veterans cannot be overstated. CRAB has hosted tens of thousands of Marylanders and warriors for over 3 decades. We can speak first-hand about the life changing experience that sailing on the Bay can mean to people who never thought they would have the opportunity to be on a boat and learn to sail.

Not too long ago, one of our guests arrived in a wheelchair to go sailing with CRAB on a picture-perfect day. Sailing near the Bay Bridge, he turned to the volunteer skipper onboard and said, "I want to thank you for taking me the farthest I have ever been from my wheelchair and the memories that put me in it." This guest shared his feelings and opened our eyes and hearts to the freedom and thrill of sailing can have on a person's well-being.

CRAB provides sailing and boating at no-charge to over 1,200 guests every year. We expect to increase this number by 30% this year while operating from newly opened Annapolis Adaptive Boating Center. In addition, we will be adding Remote-Controlled Sailboat Racing for guests who don't want to leave the dock; and, fishing from the new Gemini power catamaran for the more adventurous recovering warriors who prefer fishing over sailing.

We also are very pleased to announce that CRAB will be teamed with the US Naval Academy Sailing Team to host the Recovering Warrior Sailing Regatta in September. This event brings together the next generation of military leaders and recovering warriors who have given more than most in the defense of our country for a wonderful day of competitive sailing, lunch, and awards ceremony.

CRAB is grateful to have the opportunity to testify in support of SB 0597 and we appreciate your support for its passage.

SB 597.DD Council.Support With Amendments.pdf Uploaded by: DD Council Member

Position: FWA



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE · IMPROVING LIVES

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

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. Our vision is that people with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together.

The Council supports SB 597 with the following amendments to ensure the bill reflects the needs of communities across Maryland:

- Adding "Adapted Water Sports Funds" the bill title by replacing "Boating Fund"
- Replacing "BOATING FUND" with "ADAPTED WATER SPORTS FUND" on page 2, line 14
- Adding "SURFING" after "CANOEING" page 2, line 16 and page 3, line 10
- Removing "ON THE CHESAPEAKE BAY OR ITS TRIBUTARIES AT LEAST 25 TIMES IN EACH OF THE PAST 3 YEARS." on page 3, line 26-27.

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.

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 inclusion 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 equipment¹. More needs to be done to create recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.

This bill is a step in the right direction to promote more opportunities for recreation for people with disabilities. For these reasons, the Council supports SB 597.

Contact: Dr. Stephanie Dolamore, Deputy Director, SDolamore@md-council.org

 $^{^1 \,} https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/accessibleactivities.aspx?activity=AdaptiveRecreationEquipment$

SB 597 Written Testimony Boating.docx (1).pdf Uploaded by: Lisa Belcastro

Position: FWA

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary Lisa Belcastro, Deputy Secretary



Wes Moore, Governor Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

DATE: February 22, 2024

BILL: SB 597: Human Services - Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans

Boating Fund

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and Environment

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support with amendments for SB 597: Human Services - Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund.

Senate Bill 597 would establish a grant program within MDOD supporting nonprofit organizations providing various adapted water activities for people with disabilities and service-disabled veterans.

Recreation activities such as boating, sailing, and kayaking should be welcoming for all as they promote physical, social, and emotional well-being. MDOD is thankful to the Senator for putting this bill forward and for their commitment to promoting the health and wellness of people with disabilities and service-disabled Veterans.

We support the bill, but suggest the following amendments: (1) Nonprofits offering surfing opportunities for individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans be eligible for the grant funding, (2) Remove the mention of "Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries."

These amendments would allow the fund to promote adapted water activities more equitably across the state and beyond the Chesapeake Bay region.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter. If you have any questions please contact Lisa Belcastro, Deputy Secretary, Lisa.Belcastro@maryland.gov, (443) 941-5094.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary

SB597.DD Coalition.SWA.pdf Uploaded by: Rachel London Position: FWA





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**

8601 Robert Fulton Dr Suite 140 Columbia, MD 21046

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?

1500 Union Avenue Suite 2000 Baltimore, MD 21211

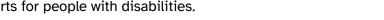
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WHAT do the proposed amendments do?

8835 Columbia 100 Pky Suite P Columbia, MD 21044

Together, all of these amendents 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.



217 E Redwood Street

Baltimore, MD 21202

Suite 1300

WHY is this legislation important?

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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 equipment¹. More needs to be done to create recreation opportunities for

7000 Tudsbury Road Windsor Mill, MD 21244

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council RLondon@md-council.org

 $^{^1\,}https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/accessibleactivities.aspx?activity=AdaptiveRecreationEquipment$