



DATE: March 5, 2024

BILL: HB 981: Maryland Department of Disabilities - Individuals with Limited English Proficiency - Access to Public Services

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

POSITION: Favorable

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support for HB 981: Maryland Department of Disabilities - Individuals with Limited English Proficiency - Access to Public Services.

This bill would add MDOD to Section 10-1103 of the State Government Article, requiring certain State agencies to take reasonable steps to provide equal access to public services for individuals with limited English proficiency. This includes access to oral language services and the translation of vital documents when the limited English proficient population constitutes 3% of the overall population of an area served by a local office of a State program.

MDOD is pleased to be added to this statute, and would like to inform the Committee that its establishment predates the creation of the Department.

Translation services and interpretation services are currently offered by the Department through a master contract with the State. MDOD is committed to the continuation of this work so all Marylanders with disabilities, their families, and caregivers, can access the services offered by the Department

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support. We kindly ask for your favorable report.

If you have any questions please contact Lisa Belcastro, Deputy Secretary,
Lisa.Belcastro@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Beatty".

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary