

## **Disability Coalition for Language Access**

HB0981 – Maryland Department of Disabilities - Individuals With Limited English Proficiency -  
Access to Public Services

Hearing of the Health and Government Operations Committee, March 5, 2024

Position: Favorable

---

**On behalf of the following 24 Maryland disability organizations, I urge you to support HB0981, which updates the Maryland code relevant to Language Access by adding the Maryland Department of Disabilities as a listed state agency:**

### ***Enriqueciendo Vidas* coalition member organizations**

The Jubilee Association of Maryland  
Disability Rights Maryland  
The Parents' Place of MD  
Autism Society of Maryland  
Independence Now  
Amigo Care ABA  
Montgomery Disability Advocates  
Montgomery County Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County  
Partnership for Extraordinary Minds (xMinds)  
Choice and Control Inc.  
Avanzos Educational and Behavioral Services LLC  
JSSA  
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington - Office of Deaf and Disabilities  
Ministries  
Community Options, Inc.

### **Other Maryland disability organizations**

People On the Go Maryland  
Ethiopian Eritrean Special Needs Community  
Chinese American Parent Association's Special Education Equal Development  
Society (SEEDS)  
Korean American Disabled People's Association  
SEEC  
Autism Society of Baltimore-Chesapeake  
Maryland Medical Management and Rehabilitation Services  
The Arc Montgomery County  
Easterseals DC MD VA

As providers dedicated to serving Maryland's disability community, including those who are marginalized by language barriers, we fully support the proposed bill HB0981. This bill seeks to update Maryland's existing code to include the Maryland Department of Disabilities, an agency that was created after the original legislation was enacted. Our organizations have witnessed the struggles faced by people with disabilities and their family members when they encounter language barriers in accessing essential services and resources. This legislation represents a

critical step towards rectifying these disparities and ensuring equal opportunities for all members of our communities.

**Given Maryland's diversity, language access services in all state agencies are essential to meet the varied linguistic needs of its population. We urge favorable action on HB0981 to advance language accessibility in the state. For more information, please contact Lisa Lorraine, Breaking Barriers Senior Manager at the Jubilee Association of Maryland: 240-531-3478, [llorraine@jubileemd.org](mailto:llorraine@jubileemd.org).**