



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**
CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES



House Ways and Means Committee

HB0050 – Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education

January 17, 2024

Position: Letter of Information

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and The Arc Maryland are statewide advocacy organizations committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). **We submit this Letter of Information on HB0050, which would establish the Commission on History, Culture, and Civics in Education.**

It is important to highlight and promote the history, culture, and diversity of Maryland, including people with disabilities. In fact, over 112,000 students with disabilities receive special education services and supports, and represent 12.4% of the student population in Maryland. That percent is similar to the total population in Maryland.

The disability community is diverse and our history is full of rich stories of people with disabilities who have paved the way for greater equity, inclusion, and access for all. Unfortunately, disability history also includes Institutions, maltreatment of people throughout time, denial of human rights, and other injustices. Missing from our history books are in-depth lessons on how people with disabilities were treated in important periods of history, and information about historical figures with disabilities who shaped the world in which we live.

In order to truly promote diversity and equity, and encourage safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students in our educational environments, we believe membership on the commission should include additional representation from the community of people with disabilities. We note that the term “differently abled” means different things to different people. The community prefers person first or identity first language. We suggest using “person with a disability” or “student with a disability” in the bill.

It is important that our academic standards are built to reflect the historical and intellectual contributions of diverse populations, and encourage environments that respect and welcome all people, including people with disabilities.

For more information, please contact:

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