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To: house Appropriations Committee

Subject: Support for Bill Number HB0214 - Maryland Assistive Technology Program Establishment

I am writing to you as a long-standing resident of Maryland and as the owner of Innovative Speech Therapy, a business that has been based in Montgomery County for over 30 years. Our mission is to empower individuals with disabilities and aging adults through the use of assistive technology, enhancing their quality of life and enabling greater independence.

It has come to my attention that Maryland residents are currently facing significant disadvantages in accessing and implementing assistive technology compared to our neighbors in states such as Pennsylvania and New Jersey. This disparity has profound implications, not only for individuals' autonomy but also for their ability to participate fully in society.

The Maryland Department of Disabilities has proposed a departmental bill, SB0208, which seeks to codify the Maryland Assistive Technology Program (MDTAP) in State Statute. This bill is a monumental step forward as it also seeks to authorize MDTAP to charge for essential services such as AT Assessments, customized AT Training, and Digital Accessibility Assessments.

These services are critical in addressing the current needs gap in our state and will provide our program with the sustainability needed to continue supporting our community effectively. As someone who has witnessed first-hand the transformative impact that appropriate assistive technology can have, I strongly support this bill.

Enabling MDTAP to offer these services will not only enhance our ability to serve Marylanders with disabilities but also ensure that our state remains a leader in promoting inclusivity and accessibility. By supporting SB0208, you are advocating for a Maryland where everyone, regardless of their physical, cognitive or communicative capabilities, has the opportunity to live their life to the fullest.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this crucial matter. I urge you to support SB0208 and help Maryland advance towards a more inclusive and accessible future for all its residents.

Sincerely,

Joan Green  
Owner, Innovative Speech Therapy