

Mr. Mark & Mrs. Luzhelena Turner

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February 7, 2025

Delegate Ms. Sarah S. Wolek

Lowe House Office Building, Room 222
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Subject: Letter of Support for the TerpsEXCEED Program at the University of Maryland

Honorable Delegate Ms. Sarah S. Wolek and Maryland House of Delegates Members,

We are the parents of a student currently enrolled in the Program, and we are writing our testimony to strongly support the **TerpsEXCEED Program** at the **University of Maryland, in College Park**. Our son, 26, was diagnosed with a disability at a very young age, and this condition has brought limitations to him throughout his life, but we as parents have never given up on him and have always relied on his strengths allowing him to continue growing and developing as an individual, as much as possible. We have seen in our son the transformative initiative and the invaluable opportunities the Program TerpsExceed has provided for him as an individual with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). We are confident the Program has been equipping him with the skills, confidence, and connections that are so important to grow academically and to find employment in the future. We have witnessed significant growth in our son's self-assurance and social development, and we are certain that the Program will continue giving him the necessary tools to allow him to expand his opportunities for his future life, increasing his chances to feel included and useful within the community he belongs to.

TerpsEXCEED is more than just a program—it is a pathway to **independence, workforce readiness, and social inclusion**. Through its **comprehensive job coaching, peer mentoring, and career development services**, participants gain real-world experience, build meaningful relationships, and become active, contributing members of our community. By integrating students with disabilities into college life and the workforce, TerpsEXCEED fosters **diversity, equity, and inclusion**, benefiting not only the students but also their peers, employers, and society as a whole.

As Maryland continues to champion educational and workforce initiatives that promote accessibility and inclusion, it is **imperative to sustain and expand funding** for programs like TerpsEXCEED. The resources and opportunities it provides are life-changing, helping students with disabilities gain employment skills, develop social connections, and achieve personal success.

We truly urge you to continue supporting this critical program to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to higher education, workforce training, and the chance to reach their full potential. Thank you for your leadership in fostering an inclusive and equitable future for all Marylanders.

Respectfully,

Mr. Mark & Mrs. Luzhelena Turner