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Laurel H. Maury,
Annapolis MD

TESTIMONY ON HB912 - POSTION: FAVORABLE
Institutions of Higher Education – Instructor Training – Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Hi, I'm Laurel Maury. I'm an engineer, former instructor at AACC and Howard Community College, and former AACC & UMGC student. I believe HB912 is a simple solution that will train instructors in their obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, making schools fairer for disabled students.

I'm hard-of-hearing and have adhd. Many people in IT have adhd or autism. If Maryland wants to be STEM-friendly, our schools must be ADA-friendly. But the disability accommodation problems I faced in Maryland schools made getting prerequisites for an engineering masters take three years longer than necessary because I had to keep dropping or retaking courses that didn't provide my approved accommodations.

Lack of knowledge is partly to blame. Whenever I taught a disabled student, I'd spend hours emailing administrators and knocking on doors to find out how to implement their accommodations. This usually took weeks.

All disabled students I taught at AACC and HCC reported accommodation problems or ill treatment. One HCC student burst into tears saying her other instructors berated her for using accommodations, and demanded to know her diagnosis.

Once when I believed a troubled student might have undiagnosed disabilities, both my AACC department heads told me to grade him so harshly and unfairly he'd leave my course.

All my AACC courses had accommodation problems. I made an F in Computer Networking because my instructor refused to implement my accommodations. One of my AACC Calculus professors raged at me over my accommodations, demanding I meet with him alone, and making me fear for my safety. To pass Calc II, I went to UMGC.

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Laurel Maury
laurel.maury@gmail.com