



SB 859: Fair Share for Maryland Act of 2025

Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network

SUPPORT – Favorable

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee, March 5, 2025

The Maryland Independent Living Network is a coalition of the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council and the seven Maryland-based Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs are created by federal law. CILs work to enhance the civil rights and quality of services for people with disabilities. There are seven CILs located throughout Maryland, operated by and for people with disabilities. CILs provide Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services to individuals with disabilities in their communities.

SB 859 reforms Maryland's tax system to make sure everyone pays what they owe so our communities have what they need, without raising taxes on working families or small businesses.

Maryland's support for individuals with disabilities is under assault. The State's budget shortfall is being used to slash services and supports that empower and enable people with disabilities to transition from school to employment or higher education; to receive school based mental health services; to engage in work without losing critical health care services; to prepare to enter the job market; to receive health care services and supports; and to find homes in the community. The withdrawal of state support for numerous programs, including those offered by the seven Centers for Independent Living, will have a harmful effect on a class of individuals that has faced historic discrimination and marginalization.

As Maryland moves to slash funding that supports individuals with disabilities, we can expect similar behavior from our federal government, resulting in a 'double whammy' to be borne by residents with disabilities.

We have an obligation to recognize that there is another approach our State budget shortfalls. The Fair Share Maryland Plan restructures our tax system, including changes to our income taxes, capital gains surtax, millionaires' estate tax, and child credit to provide much needed revenue for our state and a fairer tax structure. The proposed income tax measures would

positively impact those individuals with disabilities who, as a group, live in poverty at twice the rate of their non-disabled peers.

The choice seems clear: additional revenue that could avoid cuts to vital services, including programs for individuals with disabilities, and offer a reduced tax burden to families, including families with disabilities, who earn less than \$80,000 per year; or face a 'double whammy' of hurt for those families whose supports and services will be cut and whose incomes will become even more burdened.

For the above reasons and because the proposed bill promotes economic equity, the Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** SB 859 and requests a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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