



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

House Economic Matters Committee

January 21, 2025

HB 31: Consumer Protection – Right to Repair – Powered Wheelchairs Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. As such, the DD Coalition supports HB 31.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Requires powered wheelchair manufacturers to provide the things needed – from documentation to software and tools – to repair a powered wheelchair to the owner or an independent repair provider.
- Adds a provision for powered wheelchair repairs to Maryland’s Commercial Law on unfair trade practices.

WHY is this legislation important?

- **It ensures people have uninterrupted access to their primary means of mobility.** Powered wheelchair users often face difficult requirements imposed by manufacturers and long waits when something goes wrong with their wheelchair.
- **It supports small businesses, and economic fairness and growth.** Wheelchair owners *and* independent repair shops will have access to the things they need to repair powered wheelchairs.
- **Brings Maryland in line with other states that prioritize the rights of wheelchair users.** The right to repair has passed in 6 other states – California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Maine, Minnesota, and New York.

Wheelchairs are not just devices, they are extensions of the user. They provide mobility **and** independence. If a person’s wheelchair malfunctions (or is not working), it limits their ability to move around, and do the things we all want and need to do on a daily basis. HB 31, like other “right to repair” laws empowers people with disabilities to be able fix powered wheelchairs without enduring long waits or facing limitations imposed by big corporations. **Most importantly, it removes repair barriers that create significant delays that are harmful to people who rely on power wheelchairs for mobility and independence.** HB 31 is another step toward greater independence and autonomy for people with disabilities.

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