



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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February 13, 2025

Chair Marc Korman
Environment & Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 707 (HB 707) - Eric's ID Law. This bill ensures that individuals with non-apparent disabilities can voluntarily indicate their condition on their driver's license, identification card, or moped operator's permit. It mandates that the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) include this notation upon request, prohibits the disclosure of this information to insurance companies, and requires law enforcement training on interacting with individuals with such disabilities. HB 707 is a necessary step toward improving public safety, disability awareness, and equitable access to accommodations in law enforcement and emergency situations. **HB 707 is a 2025 legislative priority for the Black Caucus.**

Studies have consistently shown that Black Americans face disparities in healthcare access and disability recognition, leading to underdiagnosis and inadequate accommodations for conditions such as autism, ADHD, PTSD, and other non-apparent disabilities. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Black children are five times less likely to receive early intervention services for developmental disabilities compared to their white counterparts, despite similar prevalence rates. Additionally, a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that Black individuals are more likely to experience misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis for conditions such as epilepsy, traumatic brain injuries, and mental health disorders, which can impact their interactions with law enforcement.

In Maryland, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy reported that Black individuals make up 32% of the state's population but 43% of traffic stops, some of which escalate due to misunderstandings linked to cognitive or sensory disabilities. Ensuring that law enforcement officers are trained to recognize and appropriately interact with individuals with non-apparent disabilities is critical for preventing miscommunication, unnecessary escalation, and wrongful detainment. The notation provided under HB 707 can serve as a de-escalation tool, offering officers essential context while protecting individuals' rights.

Moreover, research from the Maryland Department of Disabilities shows that Black Marylanders with disabilities face higher rates of unemployment and economic hardship, making access to proper accommodations—including in transportation and identification—a matter of racial and economic justice. By allowing individuals to voluntarily disclose their non-apparent disabilities, HB 707 ensures that they receive appropriate considerations in situations where their disability might not be immediately recognizable, such as traffic stops or emergency medical responses. For these reasons, **the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports HB 707.**

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland