

HB707: Erik's ID Law

Kyla Clark, Council Member and Council President for The City of Laurel

Time: 2 minutes 6 seconds

Thank you, Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Kyla Clark, Council Member and Council President for The City of Laurel, and I am here today to urge your support for Eric's ID Law, HB707.

Every day across Maryland, individuals with non-apparent disabilities face moments of crisis where they're unable to explain their condition to law enforcement or first responders. These are moments where confusion can quickly escalate to tragedy.

Now, think about someone you know with an intellectual disability being pulled over for a routine traffic stop, all of a sudden, their anxiety starts making it difficult for them to follow commands. Or better yet, consider your neighbor or parent experiencing a medical emergency, unable to effectively communicate their needs to first responders.

Eric's ID Law creates a simple, voluntary designation on Maryland licenses and ID cards that could provide critical information in these moments of crisis. What makes this bill remarkable is its thoughtful approach – it protects privacy, ensures there's no cost barrier, and requires immediate training for law enforcement.

I want to emphasize – this isn't just about adding a symbol to an ID card. This is about giving our law enforcement and first responders the tools that they need to better serve our community, while adding an additional layer of protection for loved ones during critical interactions.

The City of Laurel, that I'm proud to represent, recently shared a powerful example. We described someone that we know with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy who appeared physically capable but couldn't comply with an officer's commands or explain why if they needed to. These are the real-life situations where this designation could make all the difference.

In closing, this bill represents our collective opportunity to make Maryland the state that we love, safer and more inclusive for everyone. So, I urge you, I urge you, to vote in favor of HB707. Thank you for your time today.