



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Health and Government Operations Committees

March 10, 2025

HB 1055: Commission on Nondiscrimination - Establishment

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates changes to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. Our vision is that people with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together. People with disabilities need and want to thrive in Maryland. By continuously analyzing frameworks for civil rights enforcement, HB 1055 promotes equal rights and opportunities.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Establishes a work group to analyze the impact of potential and actual actions by the federal government on Marylander's civil rights; identify gaps, inconsistencies, or deficiencies in the State and local frameworks for civil rights enforcement; and additional ways to make sure Marylanders have effective remedies for discrimination.
- Requires the work group to recommend annual legislation that responds to these mandates.

WHY is this important?

- **It is important that Marylanders with and without disabilities have the same rights and opportunities.** According to Maryland data, 22% of Maryland adults have a disability, and 12% of students in public schools. Maryland state law recognizes some rights of people with disabilities and prohibits certain types of discrimination and has certain protections for people with disabilities. **The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) enforces Maryland's laws against discrimination.**
- **Prior to this federal administration, the federal government has acknowledged for decades that people with disabilities are unfairly discriminated against.** For example, 5 federal laws protect people with disabilities from discrimination in employment. Yet, people with disabilities have an unemployment rate that is more than twice that of workers with disabilities.ⁱ Even when an applicant's disability is completely irrelevant to their ability to do a job, job-seekers with disabilities are 26% less likely to be offered an interview.ⁱⁱ
- **It promotes diversity and equity, and encourages Maryland to be a safe, welcoming, and inclusive state for all.** Unfortunately, disability history includes repeated human and civil rights violations such as forced placement in institutions, denying access to services, maltreatment of people, and other injustices. **Because of recent federal actions targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion, there is great fear among people with disabilities that this could happen again.**

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ⁱ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/statistics>

ⁱⁱ Ameri, Mason, Schur, L. et al. *The Disability Employment Puzzle: A Field Experiment on Employer Hiring Behavior*. 2015.

< <https://www.nber.org/papers/w21560> >