



March 3, 2025

The Honorable Josephine Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee
Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen St
Annapolis, MD

RE: HB 1244

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Committee Members,

My name is Robert Baynard and I am the CEO of Opportunities, Inc., a Licensed community provider of Employment and Meaningful Day services in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. I am both an appointed voting member of the Waiver Advisory Council that was established in October of 2024, and I am a current Board member of the Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS).

I am writing to you in support of HB1244 which would codify the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Waiver Advisory Council to advise and provide recommendations to the DDA on system design, service delivery, and quality enhancement strategies for Medicaid waiver programs operated by the DDA. Additionally, this legislation would require a spot on the Waiver Advisory Council for both a MACS representative and a representative from the Arc Maryland. Each of these two organizations provides a tremendous amount of advocacy for people receiving waiver services and community providers that deliver the services.

Both MACS and the Arc Maryland have been involved in a variety of efforts to ensure that Maryland's DDA Waiver Programs are able to operate without any significant challenges, and both organizations have an abundance of historical knowledge regarding the complex system of service delivery through DDA funding. Not having them on the Waiver Advisory Council can lead to the interests of all involved with waiver services not having an adequate voice. It is vital that these two organizations be able to provide feedback and recommendations related to Waiver services so that the multiple perspectives that they represent can be understood before any decisions related to Waiver amendments or submissions are made.

It is my understanding that my involvement in the Advisory Council was put forward as a reason why MACS was not included when decisions were made about the composition of the current Advisory Council. I am currently the President-Elect for the MACS Board of Directors, with my term as President slated to start in July of this year. The role as President of the MACS Board of Directors does not equip me with the same knowledge as the CEO of MACS related to Community Providers experiences delivering waiver services. I can only really speak to my organization's experiences.

I am urging this committee to move favorable with HB1244 so that these two organizations can ensure that all needed perspectives related to waiver services are shared.

Sincerely,
Robert Baynard

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