



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

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

House Health and Government Operations Committee

January 29, 2025

HB: 141: Task Force on Loneliness and Isolation

Position: **Support with Amendments**



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CREATING CHANGE · IMPROVING LIVES

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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 141 with the following amendments:

- Add the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council to Section 1(b)
- Add one representative of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition to Section 1(b)(5)

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Establishes the State Task Force on Loneliness and Isolation to study and make recommendations related to loneliness and isolation experienced by Marylanders.

WHY is this legislation and the amendments important?

- **People with developmental disabilities experience significantly higher rates of loneliness and social isolation compared to people without disabilities.** This can be due to a number of reasons, including limited social opportunities, stigma, and lack of accessible options.
- **As the Task Force evaluates the cause of the sense of loneliness and isolation, evaluates methods to prevent those feeling, and makes recommendations about ways to enhance social connections, the realities of what people with developmental disabilities experience, need to be considered.**
- **Increasing engagement and connections for people with disabilities, decreases anxiety, increases feelings of safety, calm, self-worth, and connectedness; and results in positive changes in behavior.** The DD Council worked with The Arc Maryland during COVID to provide more than 3300 Marylanders with developmental disabilities with the opportunity to stay connected to friends, family, work, and activities.

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