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January 29, 2025

House Health and Government Operations Committee
HB 141 – Task Force on Loneliness and Isolation
Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) is a non-profit association of over 125 agencies across Maryland serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). MACS members provide residential, day and supported employment services to thousands of Marylanders, so that they can live, work and fully participate in their communities.

MACS strongly supports HB 141, with the following amendments:

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

Overview of the Legislation

HB 141 establishes the State Task Force on Loneliness and Isolation, tasked with studying and making recommendations regarding the loneliness and isolation experienced by people in Maryland.

Importance of the Legislation and Proposed Amendments

The need for this legislation, along with the proposed amendments, cannot be overstated. People with developmental disabilities face significantly higher rates of loneliness and social isolation compared to their peers without disabilities. This disparity often arises from various factors, including limited social opportunities, societal stigma, and a lack of accessible options.

As the Task Force examines the underlying causes of loneliness and isolation, explores methods to prevent these feelings, and formulates recommendations to enhance social connections, it is crucial that the unique experiences of people with developmental disabilities are taken into account.

Fostering connections for people with disabilities not only alleviates anxiety but also enhances feelings of safety, calm, self-worth, and belonging. These positive changes can lead to significant improvements in behavior and overall well-being.

In conclusion, we urge the Committee to support HB 141 and adopt the proposed amendments to ensure that the voices and experiences of people with developmental disabilities are included in the Task Force's important work. Together, we can create a more inclusive and connected Maryland for everyone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Snyder
Vice President of Government Relations
gsnyder@macsonline.org