

HB 1244

Establishment of DDA waiver advisory council

March 5, 2025

Lisa VanRoekel

**Please support the request of Self-Direction stakeholders input to have weight for implementation of new policies**

When changes come as a complete surprise and are made without input from participants, family members, other individuals, and advocacy organizations in the Self-Direction community:

1)The added paperwork burden will undoubtedly crush Participants and overwhelm our Fiscal Management Services (FMCS) providers. Our employees, vendors, and others already endure significant financial harm from non-payments, with little recourse. Until those issues are addressed, new rules should not go into effect without timely notice.

2)There is no respect in not asking for our input and giving us little time to drastically ramp up the amount of red tape needed to navigate an already overburdened system. There is no dignity in the DDA using the legitimate need to ensure compliance to block our access to the funds allocated to us for DDA services in our Person-Centered Plans.

3) Self-Direction is one of the most significant innovations in publicly financed long-term supports and services in history. And yet, this simple idea—that regardless of the nature of their disability, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) who are eligible to receive Medicaid home and community-based services have the right to direct the public resources used to obtain their services —is under attack in Maryland.

While I strongly support the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) in ensuring that public resources are used in an ethical, sustainable, and fiscally responsible manner, we cannot support the inevitable harm that will result from new rules implemented without input from users.

Thank you for your consideration and for upholding for our members and all self-directing Marylanders their fundamental right to ensure *“nothing about us without us.”*