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Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, Entrance 11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Good afternoon, Honorable Chair William C Smith Jr. and distinguished members of the Judiciary Proceedings Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a written testimony regarding SB0618. My name is Terrance King, President and CEO of the National Children's Center (NCC).

I come before you as an advocate in support of SB0618, which would offer the choice of supportive identification documentation for individuals with varying abilities. It would give them the voluntary opportunity to choose how they would like to be identified on various forms, such as a Maryland license, identification card, or moped operator's permit, ensuring their experiences are acknowledged in a way that respects their preferences.

As a Maryland business, we have been providing services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) for 50 years in Montgomery. From this experience, we know firsthand how this voluntary opportunity would assist persons supported within our services of 78 individuals occupying 50 residential settings. We've created an inclusive and supportive environment where individuals can Live, Grow, Work, and Thrive.

Humanity and empowerment are the questions that are put forth before you. Every individual should have the right to identify their disability if they choose and to have supportive documentation to include them in their independent living. With this opportunity, individuals who choose to have the notation can feel safe and respected.



The National Children's Center (NCC), a unique non-profit organization established in 1958, serves over 600 infants, children, and adults with and without disabilities in the Silver Spring metropolitan region. Our comprehensive programs span from infancy to senior years and aim to bridge education, poverty, and health gaps. Over 70% of our participants are diagnosed with a disability, and our programs provide crucial support through our Early Learning and Intervention Center and Community Support Programs.

At NCC, 15% of individuals utilize transportation for school and employment, while 85% participate in the Community Day Program as part of the person-centered approach to addressing their needs. Persons supported can engage in employment readiness services, which include career assessments and step-by-step job support along their journey.

The Community Support Services, including residential and Day Programs, provide services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They are matched with a dedicated Direct Support Professional to aid in their daily activities, enhancing their sense of well-being and independence. Individuals in our residential housing program learn life skills, such as how to safely utilize public transportation.

Persons Supported and their families look to our expertise concerning advocacy outreach efforts related to accessibility and accommodations. We respect each person's right to decide how their abilities are documented. However, systemic ableism can create barriers for individuals not given the choice to have their disability identified. We want to ensure that dignity and accuracy are at the forefront of challenging these barriers and encourage empowerment for individuals to say how their disabilities (invisible) are acknowledged through documentation.

On behalf of NCC, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak before you today. I would also like to express our deep appreciation for the Maryland General Assembly, which has been instrumental in ensuring access to services and programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have a meaningful and quality life. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrance King

President and CEO