

Testimony In Support of (with Amendments) SB0618

Vehicle Laws - Licenses, Identification Cards, and Moped Operator's Permits - Notation of Nonapparent Disability

02/11/25

Position: Favorable with Amendments

My name is Katie York (they/them), and I am a community advocate and organizer. I have worked in higher education for over fifteen years. However, my proudest title is that of “parent.” Both my child and I have a non-apparent disability.

I am Autistic. I personally understand how scary it can be to worry that your normal behavior might look suspicious to those who do not know you, especially police. It is heartbreaking to think someone might mistake my not looking them in the eye as a sign I am lying to them, or that my “stimming” (behaviors meant to calm me when I am nervous or stressed, like rocking or tapping my hands) might signal to someone I am under the influence or otherwise a danger to myself and/or others. I sometimes misunderstand what people say, or as clarifying questions that might be perceived as non-compliance.

However, I worry that putting information about an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD) on a license or state ID can open that individual up to additional discrimination. This proposed law is often described in the context of an interaction of a person with an IDD and law enforcement. But individuals may be asked to show a license or state ID in many other situations, such as during the employment process, getting into secure locations (like government buildings here in Annapolis but also their child’s school), while traveling, or when opening a bank account. In these types of situations, people viewing the license or ID will not necessarily have any additional training on IDD, but, depending on the final design of the designator, may now know this individual in front of them has an IDD.

Additionally, I believe the true focus should be on providing funding for better training for emergency personnel, especially law enforcement, who across the US are known to harm and kill Disabled people at a higher rate than non-disabled people¹, especially if the individual also holds another historically marginalized identity.² For example, Black and other People of Color are more likely to be harmed and killed because of interactions with law enforcement, especially if they are also Disabled.² However, I support individual choice and autonomy and understand that despite my personal reservations, people should have the option to include this designator on their license or ID if they wish.

I am requesting the following amendments:

- Clarify in writing that only the individual or their parent/legal guardian can request the IDD designation be added on an ID/license

Testimony In Support of (with Amendments) SB0618

Vehicle Laws - Licenses, Identification Cards, and Moped Operator's Permits - Notation of Nonapparent Disability

- Clarify in writing that the designation can be removed from the license at *any time* (not just upon 18th birthday) at the request of the applicant or their parent/legal guardian and there is no fee to get a corrected document if there are no other changes
- Work with existing groups, such as the Ethan Saylor Alliance and self-advocacy groups like People on The Go, to hire multiple people with developmental disability and intellectual disability from various backgrounds to both deliver and regularly update/revise the training
- Require this training annually for all emergency personnel, not just police

While I am suggesting amendments, I want to make it clear that I strongly support the core intent of this bill, which ultimately is keeping people safe and possibly save lives. As one person noted last year in testimony for a previous version of this bill, if this law can safe one person's life, it will be worth it. Thank you for your consideration of both my concerns and proposed amendments to SB0618: *Vehicle Laws - Licenses, Identification Cards, and Moped Operator's Permits - Notation of Nonapparent Disability* I urge you to return a favorable report.

Regards,
Katie York
Edgewood, Maryland
HarfordNeurodivergents@gmail.com

Sources:

1

- <https://communicationfirst.org/police-brutality-a-speech-disability-concern/>
- <https://www.stanfordlawreview.org/print/article/policing-under-disability-law/>
- https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-14447-9_23
- <https://namiillinois.org/half-people-killed-police-disability-report/>
- <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/police-violence-is-a-disability-justice-issue/>
- <https://nlawcrdj.medium.com/33-years-after-the-ada-police-violence-remains-one-of-the-biggest-threats-to-the-lives-of-disabled-2427f8bf32f9>
- <https://rudermanfoundation.org/media-missing-the-story-half-of-all-recent-high-profile-police-related-killings-are-people-with-disabilities/>

2

Testimony In Support of (with Amendments) SB0618

Vehicle Laws - Licenses, Identification Cards, and Moped Operator's Permits - Notation of Nonapparent Disability

- <https://time.com/5857438/police-violence-black-disabled>
- <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/understanding-policing-black-disabled-bodies/>
- https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Racism/RES_43_1/NGOsAndOthers/disability-rights-ohio.pdf
- <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/policing-killing-black-disabled-people-centering-intersectionality-critical-reducing-harm>