



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 137: School Safety Act of 2025

January 23, 2025

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. HB 68 does the opposite by denying in-person education to students charged with a crime of violence whether or not they are found to have committed the crime. The Council agrees with our colleagues on the Education Advocacy Coalition, and supports their testimony. Specifically, we want to reiterate the following:

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state law requires the provision of a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. That means students with disabilities will be educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible, and unless their Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires another arrangement, they will attend the school they would if they did not
- **HB 137 completely ignores this federal mandate by removing students wholesale from their schools, without consideration of the individualized needs of students or their educational rights.**
- HB 137 imposes a blanket prohibition on school attendance by all students who have been charged with, not even found to have committed, a crime of violence. **This blanket prohibition violates Section 504 and the ADA, which require reasonable accommodation and reasonable modification of policies and practices, respectively.**
- **There are existing safeguards.** Maryland's current reportable offense statute and regulations, Md. Code, Educ. § 7-303, already provides robust safeguards to address safety concerns while ensuring that children with disabilities are not unfairly deprived of their educational opportunities. These mechanisms allow for case-by-case evaluations and alternative placements if deemed necessary, maintaining a balance between safety and educational rights.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, RLondon@md-council.org