



BILL: SB 22

POSITION: FWA – Favorable with Amendments

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

HEARING DATE: March 25, 2026

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) offers this letter of support for **SB 22, Department of Disabilities - Housing Program and Affiliated Foundations – Established**, including sponsor amendments as discussed below.

Legislation Summary

This legislation is critical to the long-term sustainability and growth of essential programs for people with disabilities. SB 22 would authorize MDOD to establish an independent, non-governmental affiliated foundation. This foundation would be empowered to raise funds, apply for grants, and form private partnerships for the benefit of MDOD’s assistive technology, employment, and affordable housing programs. Our assistive technology and housing programs, in particular, have previously been supported through Federal funds. MDOD is concerned that future Federal funding may become unreliable and thus intends to explore other options for supporting this work. SB 22 poses no cost to the State as MDOD will use existing resources to create the foundation, which will then be self-supporting.

The legislation also codifies our existing housing program. MDOD partners with other State and local agencies, including the Maryland Department of Health and the Department of Housing and Community Development, to operate several housing programs for people with disabilities. These are statewide programs that offer access to subsidized, ADA-accessible rental housing. MDOD manages the waitlist for these programs and oversees case management services for some of the renters. SB 22 does not change this work, but rather codifies it in MDOD’s statute at a high level to ensure that the housing work can receive funds from the affiliated foundation created by SB 22. We intend for the affiliated foundation to seek additional resources to expand housing opportunities for people with disabilities across the state, whether through additional rent subsidies or the development of more accessible units.

Session History and Votes

SB 22 was heard in the Senate Finance Committee on January 28, 2026. The cross-file, HB 226, was heard before the Appropriations Committee on February 3, 2026. In both hearings, State agencies and community partners filed strong letters of support and there were no unfavorable witnesses. Both SB 22 and HB 226 received favorable reports from their respective committees, and in both cases the favorable vote was unanimous among all voting members. Both committees adopted sponsor amendments to make a minor correction to the reference to the Office of the Attorney General. SB 22

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passed the Senate with a vote of 44-0. During second reader, the House adopted floor amendments and passed HB 226 with a vote of 122-6.

Sponsor Amendments

MDOD supports the adoption of the same amendments to SB 22 that the House adopted for HB 226. We believe these amendments align with our intention that the affiliated foundation's only purpose is to generate resources to support MDOD's work - and not to exert any influence on MDOD's priorities, programs, or activities.

Attached to this testimony, please find the floor amendments for HB 226. We request that the same amendments be made to SB 22.

Conclusion

We thank the Appropriations Committee for its strong support of HB 226 and respectfully request a **favorable report (with sponsor amendments) for the cross-file, SB 22**. Passing this legislation will provide MDOD with the necessary flexibility to access private funding and partnerships, which is essential for sustaining and expanding programs and services that help Marylanders with disabilities work, learn, and live in their communities.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Beatty

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary
Department of Disabilities



HB0226/973122/1

BY: Delegate Chisholm

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 226
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 8, after “projects;” insert “prohibiting an affiliated foundation from influencing certain determinations made by the Department;”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 4, in line 11, after “NOT” insert “:

(I)”;

and in line 12, after “PURPOSE” insert “;

(II) MAKE, INFLUENCE, OR PARTICIPATE IN DETERMINATIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY FOR ANY PROGRAM, BENEFIT, OR SERVICES ADMINISTERED OR SUPPORTED BY THE DEPARTMENT; OR

(III) ESTABLISH, INFLUENCE, OR IMPLEMENT PUBLIC POLICY, PROGRAM STANDARDS, PRIORITIES, OR ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE DEPARTMENT”.

On page 5, after line 30, insert:

“(I) THIS SECTION MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO LIMIT OR RESTRICT THE AUTHORITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OR OTHER AUTHORIZED GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY OR MAKE POLICY DECISIONS.”.