

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_SB22_HouseCross.p

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 25, 2026

Senate Bill 22
Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations -
Establishment
House Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 22 requires the Department of Disabilities to establish affordable and accessible housing programs; authorizing the Department to establish one or more affiliated foundations to work with certain programs and units of the Department to solicit and accept funds, partner with individuals and entities, and promote certain activities that support certain projects; and requiring the Department by September 1 each year to report to the Governor, the Legislative Policy Committee and the Ethics Commission certain information related to the programs.

This legislation is necessary because people with disabilities face disproportionately high housing and living costs, which affect their ability to remain stable and thrive in the community. Nationwide, people with disabilities are more likely to be low-income and rent-burdened—paying a large share of their income toward housing—while also needing accessible features that add to overall costs.¹ In Maryland, individuals with disabilities represent about 11 percent of the population, yet there are only a limited number of subsidized accessible rental units, highlighting a gap between need and supply.² High housing costs combined with additional disability-related expenses can strain household budgets, making financial stability and independent living more difficult without targeted supports.

Affordable and accessible housing is not just a matter of cost; it is essential for equity and inclusion. The lack of quality, accessible housing contributes to housing instability and increases the risk of homelessness among people with disabilities. Nearly half of unhoused individuals

¹ https://mih-inc.org/housing-info/housing-accessibility/?utm_source

² https://www.disabilitybelongs.org/2025/11/houselessness-disability-community/?utm_source

nationwide live with a disability, demonstrating how housing insecurity and disability are deeply connected.³ Accessible housing that meets the needs of people with mobility, sensory, or cognitive challenges is critical for safe, independent living and full participation in community life.

By establishing and supporting foundation-linked housing programs, Senate Bill 22 promotes equity in access to housing for people with disabilities. These programs can help close the gap between the number of accessible units and the number of individuals who need them, reduce cost burdens on households with disabilities, and ensure that individuals and families can live in communities where they can work, learn, and thrive. This legislation acknowledges that housing stability and accessibility are foundational to dignity, opportunity, and long-term well-being for Marylanders with disabilities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **SB 22**.

Thank you for your consideration.

³ https://mih-inc.org/housing-info/housing-accessibility/?utm_source

X_SB0022_DHCD_SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Jake Day

Position: FAV



WES MOORE
Governor
ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor
JACOB R. DAY
Secretary
JULIA GLANZ
Deputy Secretary

DATE: March 25, 2026
BILL NO.: Senate Bill 22
TITLE: Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations - Establishment
COMMITTEE: House Appropriations Committee

Letter of Support

Description of Bill:

Senate Bill 22 would authorize the Maryland Department of Disabilities to establish one or more independent, non-governmental foundations to support their programs. One of their programs impacted by this bill is their Affordable Apartments Program.

Background and Analysis:

The Department of Disabilities' Affordable Apartments Program sought to house non-elderly, disabled persons at 10-30 percent of the Area's Gross Median Income. Capital grants were available to owners as an incentive to designate units for occupancy at affordable rents specifically for low-income persons with disabilities. However, as the private sponsorship of the program ended, the program was not able to expand beyond its current capacity.

The establishment of nonprofits to support the Department of Disabilities' programs, like the Affordable Apartments Program, is essential to providing the necessary funding for housing for people with disabilities in the State. Oftentimes, the cost of construction to have a project meet accessibility standards is too expensive for developers. Programs like this give developers the incentive, through the capital grants, to build the types of housing that Marylanders need.

With the passage of this legislation, valuable programs like the Affordable Apartments Program can continue to expand to meet the needs of the State by offering more affordable units to Maryland residents who live with a disability.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 22.



SB22_MD Labor_LOS_House Hearing.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenna Bachman

Position: FAV

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 22

TO: Appropriations Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)
DATE: March 25, 2026
BILL: Department of Disabilities- Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations- Establishment

MD LABOR POSITION: SUPPORT

SB22 requires the Department of Disabilities to establish affordable and accessible housing programs. To do so, the Department may establish one or more foundations to work with the Maryland Assistive Technology Program, the Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program, the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy, and the Department's Affordable and Accessible Housing Programs. The goal of these foundations is to enhance accessible information technology, effective use of assistive technology, and environmental adaptations that promote the ability of individuals with disabilities to participate in employment, affordable and accessible housing, and other aspects of daily life.

The Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) supports SB22's goal of establishing foundations and programs that enhance the ability of individuals with disabilities to participate in employment and accessible, affordable housing. MD Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning's (DWDAL) mission is to ensure businesses have the skilled workforce they need to compete in the global marketplace, and to build a strong pipeline of qualified workers by reaching jobseekers – especially individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities

DWDAL has a Disability and Youth Services Coordinator who supports workforce development activities across the State for individuals with disabilities. The Coordinator who currently works closely with the Department of Disabilities would be able to work with the foundations formed by SB22. MD Labor is committed to working with the Department of Disabilities to increase access to job training services for individuals with disabilities, ensuring that *all* Marylanders have access to pathways to family-sustaining careers that MD Labor's services offer.

The Department respectfully requests a favorable report on SB22. For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti at Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov.

SB0022 SEEC favorable testimony 3 25 26.pdf

Uploaded by: Katrina Kugel

Position: FAV



1300 Spring St
Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: 301.576.9000
www.SEECOnline.org

SB0022: Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations – Establishment

Position: Favorable

Hearing date: March 25, 2026

Committee: House Appropriations

On behalf of SEEC, a community provider of services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), we encourage a favorable report on SB0022. We also support the amendments brought forth from the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

By adding affordable and accessible **housing** programs as an official responsibility of the Department of Disabilities as well as supporting access to **technology** and **employment**, as well as other programs by establishing affiliated foundations, this bill will increase the independence and community participation by people with disabilities. From our experience of supporting over 300 adults with I/DD we know firsthand the importance of these programs so people can direct their lives with dignity, choice, authority, and responsibility within their own communities.

One of the main tenets of the 1999 Olmstead Supreme Court case is that people with disabilities have the right to live in the most integrated, community-based setting as possible and not forced to live in institutions. The right of people with disabilities to choose where they live can only be achieved with a reliable, affordable, and accessible **housing supply**. Adding affordable and accessible housing programs as an official responsibility of the Department of Disabilities will help ensure that people with I/DD have more choice and freedom when it comes to where they live.

As Sizhe, someone we support stated, I have the housing supports through Jubilee, a community provider. I moved out of my parents house September of last year. I have two roommates and I live at Main Street, affordable housing for people with disabilities (25%) and neurotypical people (75%).

At SEEC, **assistive technology** is another critical vehicle to reject ableism and reinforce choice, autonomy, and dignity for the people we support. The Department of Disabilities has been a valued partner in this initiative. This is not about fitting people to technology, it is about creating an inviting process led by the people we support and finding the right mix of high- and low-tech so they can build their own resources to communicate, be independent and included.

Robert, supported by SEEC, shared that technology is critical for his success at work. He does not communicate in a typical manner so his team communicates virtually using TEAMS and Robert also uses his iPad or the notes function on his phone when he converses with coworkers. Instead of using the call function on his phone to communicate with applicants, Robert emails them. Anything that he would normally handwrite such as an invoice number or signature on a purchase order, he makes labels for instead.

His Director stated that Robert is such a friendly and social person, and that he just suits the human resources department so well and he is an active and valuable member on the team. When asked about what he likes most about his job Robert responded that he likes making money, learning new skills all the time, and giving a hand with office tasks. He also started a retirement account.

At SEEC, we believe **meaningful employment** is a cornerstone for people belonging in their community. With the support of the Department of Disabilities, people with disabilities can discover their passions and prepare for meaningful roles in the workplace. The results speak for themselves: businesses partnering with SEEC report increased workplace productivity and morale, while job seekers gain independence, confidence, and a sense of belonging. It is not only about not just matching people with their ideal jobs, but also transforming lives and shaping more opportunities for everyone.

We believe in the power of alliance and the Maryland Department of Disabilities is one of our most valuable partners. This bill will increase opportunities and independence for people we support and we urge its passage. Thank you.

Warmly,
Karen Lee, CEO
Katrina Emmerson Kugel, Government Relations Manager

SB22 - MDOD Departmental.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Manzoni

Position: FAV

March 23, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

Maryland Works respectfully submits this letter in strong support of **SB22, Department of Disabilities – Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations – Establishment**.

Maryland Works serves as a coordinating entity for employment opportunities for people with disabilities and works closely with State agencies, providers, and employers to advance economic mobility, independence, and inclusion. We strongly support this legislation because it creates a flexible, cost-neutral tool that will allow the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to strengthen and sustain critical programs that directly support employment, assistive technology, and affordable housing for people with disabilities.

This bill authorizes MDOD to establish one or more independent, non-government affiliated foundations to raise private funds, pursue grants, and form public-private partnerships. These foundations would provide essential supplemental support to MDOD programs that face rising costs, limited growth capacity, or uncertain future federal funding, while imposing **no fiscal cost to the State**.

Maryland Works is particularly supportive of the potential impact on the **Maryland Technology Assistance Program (MDTAP)** and the **Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program (ATLP)**. Assistive technology is foundational to employment success for many individuals with disabilities. MDTAP's lending libraries and ATLP's low-interest loan programs directly support workforce participation, yet both programs face growth limitations due to funding constraints. The ability to leverage private philanthropy through an affiliated foundation would help stabilize and expand access to these critical employment supports.

We also strongly support the bill's benefit to the **Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy (ODEAP)**, which leads the State as a Model Employer initiative. As Maryland Works collaborates with State agencies and employers to improve hiring and retention of people with disabilities, we recognize that philanthropic partners often prefer to donate to non-governmental entities for tax and administrative reasons. This legislation removes that barrier and enables private investment in disability employment innovation and systems change.

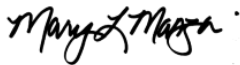
Finally, the bill's support for the **Affordable Apartments Program** aligns with Maryland Works' understanding that stable, accessible housing is inseparable from employment success. Allowing MDOD to reestablish and expand private partnerships through affiliated foundations will help ensure that housing initiatives for people with disabilities can grow beyond their current capacity.

SB22 follows successful models already in State law and mirrors legislation enacted for other agencies, such as the Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Stadium Authority. It provides MDOD with modern, responsible tools to strengthen programs without increasing State spending, while increasing accountability, innovation, and sustainability.

For these reasons, Maryland Works urges a **favorable report** on SB22. We appreciate the Committee's consideration and its continued commitment to advancing opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Manzoni



CEO
Maryland Works



Phone
410.381.8660



Email
info@mdworks.com



Address
10270 Old Columbia Rd. Ste 100

HB226_Testimony.docx cross file of SB 22 Maryland

Uploaded by: Mat Rice

Position: FAV



Testimony of People On the Go Maryland

House Bill 226 (Cross-file of Senate Bill 22)

Department of Disabilities – Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations – Establishment

Primary Sponsor: Chair, Appropriations Committee

(By Request – Departmental – Disabilities, and by Request of the Governor)

House appropriations Hearing – March 25 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

to the Honorable members of the House Appropriations Committee:

People On the Go Maryland (POG) is a statewide self advocacy/systems advocacy organization run for and by people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Our mission is to empower individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to speak for themselves, make their own decisions, and live the lives they choose in their communities. We represent the voices of Marylanders with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who seek independence, dignity, and the fundamental right to live in communities of their choice.

People On the Go Maryland strongly recommends a **favorable report** on House Bill 226, the cross-file of Senate Bill 22.

The Housing Crisis Facing Marylanders with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

- Adults with disabilities experience poverty at more than twice the rate of non-disabled peers.
- The maximum federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit of \$914 per month is insufficient to afford a one-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in any state.
- There is a national deficit of over 7 million affordable housing units.
- Less than 5% of housing is accessible for moderate mobility difficulties; less than 1% is accessible for wheelchair users.
- An estimated 7 million renters with disabilities are moderately or severely cost-burdened, spending over 30% of their income on rent.
- Nearly 25% of the 580,000+ people experiencing homelessness on any given night have a disability.
- The housing shortage forces many individuals into institutional settings against their will.

The Proven Benefits of Community-Based Housing and Integration

Community living leads to improved quality of life, greater autonomy, enhanced social integration, increased independence, and better health outcomes. Research consistently demonstrates that individuals in community settings develop broader social networks, more personal relationships, and greater community participation.

Moving from institutions to community residences is associated with increased independence and decreased maladaptive behaviors.

The "Housing First" model has been proven to increase housing stability, reduce homelessness, improve quality of life and clinical health indicators, and reduce costly emergency visits and hospitalizations.

The Legal Imperative: *Olmstead v. L.C.* and the Integration Mandate

The U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1999 decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* held that unjustified segregation of people with disabilities in institutions constitutes discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). States must provide services in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities.

As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote, institutional confinement "perpetuates unwarranted assumptions that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life."

In 2023, an estimated 692,000 people remained on waiting lists for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers. POG agrees with the amendments to HB 226. House Bill 226 directly addresses this gap by mandating housing programs under the Department of Disabilities.

The Essential Role of Affiliated Foundations in Sustainable Funding

Over 1,250 foundations nationally fund independent housing for people with disabilities, with collective assets of approximately \$879 billion.

Successful state programs demonstrate the viability of this approach. New York's Integrated Supportive Housing Program and Virginia's State Rental Assistance Program serve as proven models for expanding affordable, accessible housing through public-private partnerships.

House Bill 226 includes robust safeguards: affiliated foundations must operate under policies approved by the **Attorney General** and the **State Ethics Commission**, undergo **annual independent audits**, and submit **annual reports** to the Governor and Legislature. Foundation contributions are supplemental and not intended to replace regular state appropriations.

Positive Outcomes Expected from House Bill 226

- Creation of a statutory mandate for housing programs
- Expansion of affordable, accessible, and integrated housing options
- Reduction in unnecessary institutionalization and homelessness
- Enhanced compliance with the *Olmstead* integration mandate
- Establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms through affiliated foundations
- Improved health outcomes
- Greater independence, autonomy, and self-determination

- Relief for aging family supporters
-

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities deserve the same opportunities as all Marylanders to live independently, participate fully in their communities, and pursue their dreams. Housing is the foundation upon which all other aspects of community life are built. House Bill 226 provides the legislative framework and sustainable funding mechanisms necessary to address the severe housing crisis facing this population.

The evidence is clear and compelling: community-based housing leads to better outcomes, greater independence, and improved quality of life for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

For these reasons, People On the Go Maryland strongly recommends a favorable report on House Bill 226.

Contact Information

Mat Rice, Executive Director

People On the Go Maryland

Email: mat@pogmd.org

Phone: 410-925-5706

SB 22- APP- MDH - LOSAA (1) (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

March 25, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
121 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 22 – Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations - Establishment – Letter of Support as Amended

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support as amended for Senate Bill (SB) 22 – Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations - Establishment, including sponsor amendments made by the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

SB 22 authorizes the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to establish one or more affiliated foundations associated with MDOD programs, including but not limited to the Maryland Assistive Technology Program (MDTAP) and the Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program. Establishing affiliated foundations would enable MDOD to pursue additional sources of financial support that are otherwise unavailable to State agencies, including grant opportunities that are limited to nonprofit entities.

MDTAP provides Marylanders with disabilities access to assistive technology devices and services, including through assistive technology libraries and short-term device loans.¹ The Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program assists individuals with disabilities and their families in obtaining low-interest loans to purchase equipment that supports greater independence in daily living, employment, and education.²

SB 22 represents an innovative and fiscally responsible approach to strengthening these critical programs, without exacerbating the State's current budget constraints. Further, the bill aligns with existing precedent. Chapter 443 of the Acts of 2025 (HB 717)³ similarly authorized the Department of Natural Resources to establish affiliated foundations. The Department supports SB 22 in light of Maryland's designation as a Technology First State, established by

¹ Maryland Department of Disabilities, Maryland Technology Assistance Program. *MDTAP's Mission*. <https://mdod.maryland.gov/mdtap/Pages/Mission.aspx>.

² Maryland Department of Disabilities, Maryland Technology Assistance Program. *AT Low-Interest Financial Loan Program*. <https://mdod.maryland.gov/mdtap/Pages/ATLowloan.aspx>.

³ https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2025RS/Chapters_noln/CH_443_hb0717e.pdf

gubernatorial proclamation on August 15, 2022.⁴ Technology First affirms that individuals with disabilities may choose technology as the primary means of receiving services, or as a targeted solution. This commitment reflects Maryland’s goal of ensuring all Marylanders with disabilities can access the tools they need to live, work, and participate fully in their community.

The Department partners closely with MDOD, which is an active member of the Tech First Task Force. MDOD provides essential consultation and training to Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) program staff, Coordinators of Community Services, families, and individuals with lived experiences. By expanding MDOD’s ability to secure additional funding, SB 22 strengthens this interagency partnership and supports the effective implementation of Technology First principles across programs.

Expanding access to assistive technology through additional financing opportunities yields significant benefits for Marylanders with disabilities, including:

- **Maximized Independence:** Assistive technology supports greater self-sufficiency in activities of daily living, reducing reliance on in-person staff.
- **Increased Control and Choice:** Tools such as scheduling apps, electronic checklists, and remote supports allow people to receive assistance when and how they need it.
- **Enhanced Community Connection:** Communication technologies and adaptive equipment expand opportunities for employment, social engagement, and community participation.
- **Improved Quality of Life:** Assistive technology reduces frustration, supports dignity, and promotes autonomy by minimizing unnecessary barriers and power imbalances.

The Department supports the amendments put forth by MDOD and the Department respectfully supports passage of SB 22 as amended. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Meghan Lynch, Director of Governmental Affairs, at meghan.lynch@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D
Secretary of Health

⁴ Maryland Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Administration. *Technology First*. <https://health.maryland.gov/dda/Pages/Technology-First.aspx>.

SB22.DDCouncil.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Appropriations Committee

SB 22: Department of Disabilities – Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations - Establishment

March 25, 2026

Position: Support

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. As such, we support efforts to increase opportunities for Marylanders with and without disabilities to live, learn, work, and play together. SB 22 does just that.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- SB 22 lets the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) create one or more independent, non-government foundations to support its programs. There is no cost. MDOD will do this with existing resources, and the resulting foundation will support itself.
- These foundations could raise funds, apply for grants, and enter into partnerships to benefit MDOD programs that support assistive technology, employment, and affordable housing for people with disabilities.

WHY is this legislation important?

- **This bill increases access to funding and partnership opportunities for MDOD's critical programs.** Two programs that provide assistive technology for people with disabilities; the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy to improve policies to help people with disabilities get and keep jobs in State government; and the Affordable Apartments Program that provides affordable, accessible housing units to people with disabilities.
- **More funding and partnerships increase access to the critical support people with disabilities need to live, learn, work, and play in the community.** 24% of Marylanders have a disability.

MDOD's work to increase access and opportunity for Marylanders with disabilities is done with limited State and federal funding. The programs provide critical support to people with disabilities, and the ability to expand them would greatly benefit Marylanders. Given the importance of these programs, and the need of Marylanders with disabilities, this no cost bill makes sense.

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

Cross Favorable SB0022 Disability Housing.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronza Othman

Position: FAV



Live the life you want.

From: Ronza Othman, President
National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
15 Charles Plaza, #3002
Baltimore, MD 21201 president@nfbmd.org

To: House Appropriations Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the House Appropriations Committee to give a favorable report to SB0022 -

Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations - Establishment.

Accessible and affordable housing is the greatest challenge that people with disabilities have to face. There is a shortage and the waiting list is extremely long. This bill goes beyond lip service by offering a good solution. It establishes housing programs and it gives the department the authority to develop relationships with foundations that can support these programs with the necessary funding. This bill develops private-public partnerships and allows the department to get some funding from foundations rather than the State, so there should not be a high fiscal note.

The goal of this bill is to offer integrated housing of their choice to persons with disabilities. Please vote "Yes" on this important bill.

For those reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB0022. For questions, please contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.

3.25.26.SB22HousingPrograms.FelloSIGNED.pdf

Uploaded by: Rylie Shewbridge

Position: FAV

March 25, 2026

Chair Ben Barnes
House Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB22/HB226 – Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations - Establishment

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Fello, we write in support of ***SB22/HB226 – Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations – Establishment*** as amended.

Across Maryland, Fello is building communities where people belong. With a team of more than 650 employees, Fello supports over 5,000 people with disabilities each year – creating opportunities that empower people to live the lives they choose. From advancing equity and respect to expanding access and connection, inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. One powerful way this comes to life is through Fello Communities: beautiful, safe, and accessible rental housing that offers choice and stability for residents across income levels, from affordable to market-rate homes.

SB22/HB226 authorizes the Maryland Department of Disabilities to develop affordable and accessible housing programs for people with disabilities and to establish affiliated nonprofit foundations to support these initiatives, while also increasing awareness of and access to employment, education, housing, transportation, recreation, health care, and other aspects of daily life. The bill allows these foundations to raise funds, promote programs, and expand services, while requiring ethical guidelines, conflict-of-interest safeguards, annual reporting, and independent audits to ensure transparency and accountability, supplementing state funding.

SB22/HB226 addresses critical housing needs, fosters public-private partnerships to extend program reach, and strengthens oversight to ensure responsible resource management, representing an important step toward expanding housing access and equity for Marylanders with disabilities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB22/HB226.

Sincerely,


Jonathon Rondeau

fello.

fello.org

410.269.1883



SB 22 - State Board_MSDE - Support (3.25.26).docx.

Uploaded by: Stefan Redding-Lallinger

Position: FAV

TO: House Appropriations Committee

BILL: Senate Bill (SB) 22 – Department of Disabilities – Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations – Establishment

DATE: March 24, 2026

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) would like to share the following information in support of the Maryland Department of Disabilities' bill, **Senate Bill (SB) 22**.

This legislation would authorize the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to establish an affiliated foundation to pursue grants and public-private partnerships in support of critical disability-focused initiatives.

The Board and MSDE strongly support the intent of this legislation, particularly its focus on expanding resources for assistive technology, housing, and employment programs for Marylanders with disabilities. These priorities are closely aligned with the mission of MSDE's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to ensure equitable access, opportunity, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

The establishment of this foundation would allow MDOD to secure resources for the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy, which was created as part of the "Model Employer Act" (HB502/SB233) during the 2025 legislative session. MSDE-DORS has been a long-time partner with MDOD in advancing the employment of Marylanders with disabilities and will continue to collaborate in furthering this important work.

Passage of Senate Bill 22 will provide a pathway for the State to leverage philanthropic investment, federal grants, and private-sector partnerships to supplement public funding and expand the reach and impact of existing programs, without increasing the burden on the State's General Fund. This additional flexibility will be essential as Maryland works to scale innovative strategies and better serve individuals with disabilities and their families.

The State Board and the Department request that the committee consider this information as it deliberates **SB 22**. Please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs, at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov, or Zach Hands, Executive Director of the State Board, at zachary.hands1@maryland.gov, if you would like any additional information.

SB0022_APP_FWA_MDOD_2026.03.23_Merged.pdf

Uploaded by: Anne Blackfield

Position: FWA



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.”

(SB 22) Appropriations Informational Testimony - S

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Position: INFO



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March 25, 2026

Senate Bill 22 – Department of Disabilities – Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations

Testimony Before the Appropriations Committee

The State Ethics Commission provides this informational written testimony to explain the impact of this proposed legislation on the agency. This legislation provides for exemptions from certain conflict of interest provisions of the Public Ethics Law for agency employees serving in specific roles with the agency-affiliated foundation. The legislation is consistent with prior legislation allowing similar exemptions for the employees of other State agencies who serve in various capacities with other agency-affiliated foundations with other State agencies such as the Maryland Stadium Authority, the Historic St. Mary's City Commission, and the Department of Natural Resources. In those instances, the exemption provisions for affiliated foundation activities are contained in the agency's specific enabling statute for the affiliated foundation rather than in the provisions of the Public Ethics Law.

Senate Bill 22 will not have a fiscal impact on the State Ethics Commission. The legislation would have a small operational impact on the agency. The State Ethics Commission will be required to work with the Department of Disabilities (DoD) to provide guidance and receive reports related to DoD officials or employees serving as an official or director of an agency affiliated foundation.