



**Maryland Developmental  
Disabilities Council**

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

February 4, 2026

**SB 51: Public Schools – Self-Contained Classrooms – Use of Video Recording Devices  
Letter of Information**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a statewide public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. Our vision is that people with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together. Maryland educates more than 118,000 students with disabilities with a variety of services and supports – most in general education classrooms.

The Council is not taking a position on this bill, but would like to provide information on the potential impacts and realities. It is important to note that some families have expressed the desire for cameras to be installed in their child’s classroom. Most of the concern comes from families of children, who because of age, trauma, or disability, cannot verbally communicate what has happened at school. Some families express that when their children come home with an unexplained injury, they have limited options to obtain additional information on the event that may have caused that injury, and that cameras afford them a tool to address it. There are also many questions:

- Are video recording devices a wise use of limited resources?
- Is anyone made safer in the presence of a camera?
- Does the use of video cameras promote a false sense of security?
- Will this lead to further segregation of students with developmental disabilities from their peers without disabilities?

TASH, a well-respected national non-profit group who advocate for the inclusion of all students in the general education classroom, has written extensively on this subject. Their position paper, [Camera Surveillance in Self-Contained Classrooms](#), provides a thorough examination of the issues considered by this bill:

- **Installing video cameras only in special education classrooms may create or strengthen a bias toward restrictive settings.** The reliance on more restrictive settings for safety contradicts the research on inclusive practice. Students with complex support needs can learn—and often learn as much, if not more—in general education settings.
- **Video camera surveillance may promote a false sense of security rather than safety.** Video evidence can be used to document abuse, but unless video is monitored in real-time, it is unlikely that camera surveillance will prevent abuse from happening. Using video camera surveillance as “evidence” of harmful staff behavior can be unreliable and/or easy to circumvent.
- **Purchasing, installing, and maintaining video cameras is costly and uses scarce educational resources.**

- Installing video cameras only in special education classrooms presents the risk that students with disabilities themselves may become the targets of surveillance.
- Relying on video cameras in special education classrooms does not build trust with either students or teachers.

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