



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

### Senate Finance Committee

January 28, 2026

**SB 199:** Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund – Eligible  
Companions

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need.

In 2024, the General Assembly created the Boating Fund. The purpose of the Boating Fund is to award grants to fund adapted water sports – like sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding – opportunities for people with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities. Adapted sports are activities modified to meet the individuals of people with disabilities

### WHAT does this legislation do?

- Expands the language of the Boating Fund created in 2024 to make sure people with disabilities can include their “eligible companions” in the activities.
- Defines eligible companions as “an accompanying family member or direct support professional.”

### WHY is it important?

- **Adapted recreation creates opportunity.** Adapted recreation allows people with disabilities to participate in sports and leisure activities with others. This allows everyone to have recreation opportunities regardless of their disability.
- **People with disabilities want inclusive recreation opportunities.** 10.7% of all Marylanders and 22.47% of Marylanders 18 and older are people with disabilities, but only 8 state parks in Maryland have adapted recreational equipment<sup>1</sup>. More needs to be done to create recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.
- **Many people with developmental disabilities rely on family members and direct support professionals to meaningfully engage in recreational activities.** This expanded language removes a potential barrier to participation.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/accessibleactivities.aspx?activity=AdaptiveRecreationEquipment>