

## SB583 Favorable Testimony (Oral)

Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

My name is Michele Gregory. I am a Maryland resident, a caregiver, and a local elected official. I'm here today in support of Senate Bill 583.

This bill requires the Deputy Secretary for Developmental Disabilities to provide public notice before making changes to the Self-Directed Services Manual, to allow at least 90 days for public comment, and to refrain from adopting changes until that comment period has ended.

At its core, this bill is about transparency.

The Self-Directed Services Manual governs how families hire caregivers, manage budgets, and access the supports that allow individuals with developmental disabilities to live safely in their communities.

I want to briefly share why that matters.

As a caregiver to an adult child with complex medical needs, our family depends on the predictability of the self-directed system. We use it to hire trusted caregivers, coordinate medical appointments, and maintain stability in a life that already involves constant medical uncertainty. When guidance shifts without warning, it is not just an administrative inconvenience. It can mean scrambling to adjust pay structures, questioning whether essential travel will be reimbursed, or worrying whether care coverage will remain intact.

In families like mine, small policy shifts can have very real consequences.

Maryland law defines self-directed services as empowering individuals to exercise employer authority and budget authority over their services. But empowerment only works when there is transparency. When rules change without notice or structured public input, families are left reacting instead of planning.

For rural families especially, where provider shortages and long travel distances are already part of daily life, instability in policy can compound existing barriers.

Senate Bill 583 does not prevent improvement. It simply requires notice, a defined 90-day comment period, and consideration of public input before changes are finalized.

That is not bureaucracy. That is responsible governance.

Families who self-direct are not asking for special treatment. We are asking for predictability, transparency, and a seat at the table before the rules that govern our care are altered.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 583.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michele Gregory". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and address.

**Councilmember Michele Gregory**  
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