



BILL: SB 22

POSITION: FWA – Favorable with Amendments

COMMITTEE: FINANCE

DATE: January 26, 2026

Dear Chair Beidle,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) offers this letter of support for **SB 22, Department of Disabilities - Housing Program and Affiliated Foundations – Established**, including amendments that make technical changes to the proposed language at § 7-117(c), as recommended by the Office of the Attorney General (see attached).

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. The legislation also codifies our existing housing program.

The affiliated foundation will support four vital units within MDOD that face funding limitations:

- **Maryland Assistive Technology Program (MDTAP):** Expansion is limited due to rising costs and uncertain future federal funding for this program, which provides a number of assistive technology services to Marylanders with disabilities.
- **Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program (ATLP):** Growth is restricted by its low-interest model, and future federal grants are not guaranteed.
- **Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy (ODEAP):** Created last year by the Model Employer Act (HB 502/SB 233), the office’s State as a Model Employer (SAME) initiative would benefit from increased private funding.
- **Affordable Apartments Program:** Expansion for this program has been stalled since its prior private partnership and federal grants concluded.

SB 22 is modeled on the Department of Natural Resources’ HB 717, which the General Assembly passed in 2025. There is no cost to the State, as MDOD will use existing resources to create the foundation, which will then be self-supporting.

Passing SB 22 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. We respectfully request a **favorable report on SB 22 (with the sponsor amendments)** from the Committee.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Beatty
Carol A. Beatty, Secretary