



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 3, 2026

Senate Bill 721

**Developmental Disabilities Administration - Services - Eligibility for Recently Relocated Individuals (Ralph's Act)
Senate Finance 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 721 requires that certain individuals who were determined to be eligible to receive certain developmental disabilities services in another state be eligible to continue to receive those services in the State; requiring the Department to establish an expedited process to make a determination on whether an individual meets certain criteria to receive services within 30 days.

The bill requires the Department to establish an expedited eligibility process, with determinations completed within 30 days. If deemed eligible, the individual would be placed in the crisis resolution category and granted access to waiver services through the most appropriate reserve category, based on the services previously received. Importantly, the Department may make eligibility and priority determinations even before the individual formally establishes Maryland residency—allowing for continuity of care and minimizing service gaps.

The current redetermination process for essential disability services can be lengthy, complex, and administratively burdensome. Individuals who relocate often face significant delays before services are restored, even when they have long-standing eligibility in another state and no change in medical or functional need. Given that most states operate similar eligibility frameworks for home- and community-based services, it is reasonable to recognize prior eligibility as strong evidence of ongoing need.

Without an expedited pathway, individuals with significant disabilities may go weeks or months without critical supports—such as personal care assistance, behavioral health services, or residential supports—simply because they crossed state lines.¹ For families already navigating the loss or incapacitation of a caregiver, these delays can be devastating. Essential care should not be interrupted during a time of crisis. Additionally, many states—including Maryland—have lengthy waiting lists for disability services, sometimes stretching for years due to funding limitations.² The risk of losing access to services or being placed at the back of a waiting list can deter families from relocating, even when moving is necessary to care for a loved one or pursue employment opportunities. No family should have to choose between staying together and maintaining access to life-sustaining supports.

By creating an expedited and predictable transition process, this legislation would make Maryland more welcoming and attractive to families caring for individuals with disabilities. It ensures that vulnerable individuals are treated with dignity and that continuity of care is prioritized. Financial or bureaucratic barriers should not prevent access to essential services, nor should they diminish quality of life or place families at risk of financial hardship. Ultimately, this bill affirms that individuals with disabilities are valued members of our communities. It promotes stability, protects families during times of crisis, and reinforces Maryland’s commitment to upholding the dignity and well-being of every person.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **SB 721**.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.kennedykrieger.org/sites/default/files/library/document/s/community/maryland-center-for-developmental-disabilities-mcdd/DDA%20-%20Waiting%20List.pdf](https://www.kennedykrieger.org/sites/default/files/library/document/s/community/maryland-center-for-developmental-disabilities-mcdd/DDA%20-%20Waiting%20List.pdf)

² [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://pathfindersforautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Moving-to-or-From-MD-with-Benefits-and-Disability-Services.pdf](https://pathfindersforautism.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Moving-to-or-From-MD-with-Benefits-and-Disability-Services.pdf)