

SENATE BILL 0583

Developmental Disabilities Administration – Self-Directed Services Manual – Public Comment

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Alicia Wopat

DATE: February 24, 2026

Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

SB583 represents an important and practical step toward restoring transparency and accountability in how policies are developed and implemented within Maryland’s developmental disabilities service delivery system. Participants, their families and teams deserve to be truly heard and their needs taken into consideration.

For many years, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) followed a workable and effective process when considering policy changes that affected self-direction. Draft policies were vetted with self-direction advocates and stakeholders prior to release, and then opened for a 30-day public comment period to allow input from the broader community. This approach was feasible, collaborative, and helped identify operational concerns before implementation—preventing unintended consequences and dysfunction within an otherwise efficient and effective service delivery model.

SB583 will assist to return to that proven framework. With amendments extending these protections to all policy guidance used by the Administration and for all users of the 1915c Waiver the bill can ensure:

- Transparency in how policies are drafted and revised
- Consistency and fairness
- Meaningful public participation before policies take effect
- Greater accountability for decisions that directly impact participants,

Policy changes in a system as complex as Maryland’s developmental disabilities network must be thoughtful, predictable, and informed by those who rely on the services every day. SB583 provides a reasonable and necessary structure to achieve that goal while protecting the integrity of self-direction and the broader service system.

This is a feasible bill. It restores a process that has worked before and helps safeguard against unintended harm—strengthening both the Administration and the community it serves.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to issue a Favorable Report with Amendments on SB583.

Respectfully submitted,
Alicia Wopat for Team A1