



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

February 24, 2026

HB 649 Education – Advancing Equal Opportunities for All Students in Maryland

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need. As a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, we believe Marylanders with and without disabilities should live, learn, work, and play together. We support HB 649 as a way to make sure that happens.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Allows the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights to investigate and resolve complaints of discrimination involving public and private prekindergarten-12 schools and institutions of higher education.
- Strengthens protections against discrimination in education and improves how Maryland enforces civil rights laws in schools.

WHY is it important?

- **Current state laws do not fully protect Maryland students and families.** Maryland's existing education anti-discrimination law (Md. Code, Educ. §§ 26-701 to 26-705) is enforced by the Maryland State Department of Education and applies only to preK-12 students. Maryland law does not explicitly cover students in higher education. These students must rely on federal anti-discrimination laws. **HB 649 provides a more accessible and independent way for accountability.**
- **Current protections often focus on intent, not impact.** Many students, including those with developmental disabilities, face discipline disparities in Maryland's schools. Too often, families lack a meaningful way to address any possible discrimination. **HB 649 would provide a critical tool to address these inequities.**

For these reasons, the Council supports HB 649.

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