

My name is **Melanie** and I'm a Silver Spring resident urging you to support and vote in favor of **HB0027**. This bill will create critical programs like the Maryland Long Covid Research Fund and support Long Covid innovation which Long Covid patients like me simply can't keep waiting for.

I developed Long Covid four years ago after a hospital-acquired infection of Covid. It has now disabled me in multiple ways, and has caused me to develop other conditions like Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome. I can no longer work full time. I suffer from over 70 symptoms, including brain fog, memory loss, physical weakness, persistent fatigue, orthostatic intolerance, and migraines.

Before Covid, I was an athlete, accomplished professional, and world traveler. Now I'm confined to my home most days and must live with a parent since I can no longer support myself financially. I never imagined my life would change so drastically in such a short span of time.

We are now in year 7 of an ongoing pandemic, and there are still no FDA approved cures for Long Covid. Hundreds of people in the U.S. are still dying each week because of Covid, and millions more are developing Long Covid. Millions of Long Covid sufferers in both the U.S. and abroad are desperately waiting for answers and solutions.

I've spent thousands of dollars of my savings on supplements, treatments, doctors, and medications, but I'm still not better. I don't qualify for disability because I am still able to work (though only about a third of my previous capacity on good days), but I am *only* forcing myself to work to be able to afford how expensive healthcare is in Maryland. Last year I spent over \$10,000 on medical costs. The year before, over \$13,000. Working drains the very little energy I have most days, and is an incredible struggle with my brain fog, migraines, and memory loss, but I don't feel like I have a choice.

In the coming years, even millions more Marylanders will continue to develop Long Covid as pandemic mitigation tools like free PCR testing and respirators (e.g., N95s and KN95s) are no longer provided, wastewater surveillance is stopped, vaccine uptake wanes, and healthcare providers and institutions eliminate protection efforts. The economic burden of Long Covid is estimated by some researchers to be at least \$1 trillion globally every single year.<sup>1</sup> By prioritizing Long Covid research and innovation, Maryland can do its part to help mitigate this health and economic disaster.

Marylanders with Long Covid like me are calling on our lawmakers for help and serious attention to the issue of Long Covid funding and research. We are depending on our state leaders to care about us and fight for us. Please support **HB0027** and be the leaders and innovators that sick and disabled Marylanders are counting on.

Thank you for your attention.

**Melanie S.**

Source: 1. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41533-025-00460-8>