



People on the Go Maryland

The statewide self advocacy/systems advocacy organization ran for and by those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

Mission: Promoting advocacy and civil rights throughout the state

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1445

Maryland Protecting People with Disabilities Act

Sponsors: Delegates Wolek, Bagnall, Barnes, Cullison, Foley, Forbes, Fraser-Hidalgo, Guyton, Kaufman, Solomon, Spiegel, Stinnett, Vogel, Wims, Woorman, and Young

Committee: Health

Hearing Date: In the House 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.

Position: FAVORABLE

Written By: Mat Rice On behalf of People On The Go Maryland

Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

People on the Go Maryland submits this testimony in **FAVORABLE** support of HB 1445, the Maryland Protecting People with Disabilities Act. This testimony is submitted on behalf of our membership, which includes people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities from across the State of Maryland.

We strongly recommend the passage of HB 1445 because it directly addresses critical issues that affect the daily lives of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in Maryland. The bill strengthens protections for individuals who rely on home and community-based services (HCBS) to live independently and participate fully in their communities.

Why HB 1445 Matters to People with Disabilities

The Olmstead decision established that people with disabilities have the right to receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. However, administrative barriers and procedural errors continue to threaten this fundamental right. HB 1445 addresses these challenges by:

- Ensuring timely eligibility determinations and redeterminations, which prevents people with disabilities from losing essential services due to bureaucratic delays
- Prohibiting procedural disenrollment based solely on missing documentation, missing signatures, or incomplete information protecting individuals from losing services through no fault of their own
- Requiring the Department to exhaust all ex parte verification processes before any termination action, reducing unnecessary burden on people with disabilities
- Mandating automatic reinstatement of services when procedural errors occur, ensuring continuity of care
- Requiring accessible information in plain language and providing language services at no cost, making the system more navigable for all people with disabilities

The Impact of Service Disruptions

For people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, losing home and community-based services can be devastating. These services enable individuals to live in their own homes, maintain employment, stay connected with their communities, and exercise their independence. When services are terminated especially due to administrative errors people with disabilities may face:

- Loss of housing stability and risk of institutionalization
- Disruption of employment and community connections
- Increased isolation and deterioration of health and well-being
- Significant stress and anxiety for both individuals and their families

HB 1445 recognizes these realities and provides meaningful safeguards to prevent unnecessary harm to people with disabilities.

Our Perspective as Self-Advocates

As an organization led by people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, we have firsthand knowledge of the anxiety and hardship caused by the threat of losing services. Many of our members have experienced the fear of receiving notices about eligibility reviews, wondering if an administrative error could result in losing the supports that enable them to live independently.

We strongly recommend that the Committee pass HB 1445 to ensure that Maryland fulfills its commitment under Olmstead and continues to be a leader in supporting

community inclusion for people with disabilities. This legislation represents an important step toward ensuring that no person with a disability loses critical services due to preventable administrative failures.

Conclusion

People on the Go Maryland strongly recommends a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 1445. We thank the Committee for considering our testimony and for its continued commitment to protecting the rights of people with disabilities in Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,

Mat Rice

Executive Director

People on the Go Maryland

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