



March 10th, 2026

Chair Bagnall and members of the Health Committee,

My name is Katelyn Szymanski, and I am here on behalf of Itineris Baltimore, a nonprofit organization supporting autistic adults. People with disabilities relying on home and community-based services are among Maryland's most vulnerable residents. Their ability to live and thrive in their communities entirely depends on uninterrupted access to the supports they're eligible to receive.

And yet, under current practice, access can be cut off. Not because someone no longer qualifies, but because of a missing signature, an unprocessed form, or a delay that was no fault of the recipient. For someone losing their direct support staff, their services, and their stability, it's not an administrative issue. It is a crisis.

The harm extends beyond individuals. When someone is wrongly disenrolled, service providers, like Itineris, must make hard decisions on how to proceed. At Itineris, we've had 4 clients whose services were disrupted in the last year. One was an individual with an annual budget of over \$500,000 receiving multiple services with us, including Community Living. When their services were disrupted, we continued to support them without certainty we'll be paid. As a non-profit organization, we rely on consistent reimbursement of funds to continue operations and remain fiscally stable. Situations like these can destabilize the very organizations built to serve this community.

HB 1445 takes direct aim at this problem. It prohibits procedural disenrollment unless the state has exhausted all options to verify eligibility. It ensures that services continue while disputes are resolved. And it requires Maryland to reinstate anyone who was wrongly dropped due to errors. Marylanders should not have to fight bureaucratic errors to keep the services they need to survive. We urge a favorable vote to protect access to services for people with disabilities. Thank you.

Katelyn Szymanski, MSW, LMSW
Neurodiversity and Advocacy Partner