

HB1593 Developmental Disabilities Administration - Self-Directed Services Manual
Public Comment - FAVORABLE

Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to address you.

I also want to thank Michele Guyton and J. B. Jennings for introducing this important legislation and recognizing the need for greater transparency in decisions made by the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration.

My name is Jennifer Drucker. I am the mother of 26-year-old Cassie with significant disabilities who relies on services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration in order to live safely in the community.

Over the past year, families like mine have experienced wave after wave of sudden changes to the DDA Service Guide. These policies appear with little warning, no public discussion, and no opportunity for the families most affected to share our expertise.

And the consequences are not theoretical.

Just last week, my daughter's entire plan of service was denied—leaving a young woman who requires 24-hour care with no services at all.

Because of that decision, my family is actually in the middle of moving right now after losing the income that allowed us to stay in our home.

When policies change without transparency or public input, families are left scrambling, terrified about how we will keep our loved ones safe.

Parents, caregivers, and people with disabilities are not obstacles to policy—we are partners. We live this system every single day. We understand what works and what does not.

Requiring public comment before major changes to the Service Guide is simply good governance. It ensures transparency, accountability, and better policy decisions.

Most importantly, it ensures that the voices of people with disabilities and their families are heard before decisions are made that can upend entire lives.

I urge you to support HB 1593 and its crossfile SB 583 so that families like mine are never again blindsided by policies that determine whether our loved ones receive the care they need to survive.

Thank you.