

February 6, 2026

Members of the House Health Committee:

I write in support of HB0027 to create a long covid grant and loan program.

I was diagnosed in my mid 30s, while parenting a then 3-year old child, with multiple disabilities that appeared almost overnight and cost me lost work time and money, lost time with my child during multiple hospitalizations, and lost memories with my family when I was homebound and bedbound and unable to participate in my normal daily activities. I do not know for sure whether or not Covid was the catalyst for my health issues, but I do know they worsened after a known Covid infection later on.

While I am likely permanently disabled, I am one of the lucky ones who (with significant time, access to medical care, and trial in error in symptom management) has been able to recover enough to work and resume participation in some of my normal activities. I have to carefully manage my health and avoid infections to keep myself well enough to work, all while knowing if another infection debilitates me, I may lose financial security, my home, my ability to work, and even social relationships. At this point, I do not know if my body could recover from another covid infection or if medical resources could even provide any relief until research progresses further on long covid to offer answers and treatment.

I know others who are not as lucky as I, and even those who with medical attention, have not been able to resume their normal daily activities due to debilitating long covid symptoms. A neighbor, previously the social glue of my block, is now unable to leave her home without assistance and unable to work due to long covid. Friends have confided in me that they have so much brain fog since a recent covid infection that they are worried about losing their jobs for inability to continue cognitive tasks as normal. Another friend spent a year housebound, unable to work or tolerate any light, with dark window coverings over windows and doors to gain just minimal relief from debilitating long-covid induced migraines.

I have watched over the past several years, as most of society has returned to a pre-covid 'normal,' my community members with Long Covid abandoned and those of us experiencing chronic symptoms sometimes harassed for things we do to protect what remains of our health, like wearing a mask in public. Although research shows there are millions of Americans with Long Covid, day to day, little attention is paid to the chronic, disabling affects of this disease on my fellow Marylanders' ability to work, attend school, manage their health, or even find a health care provider who is aware of Long Covid to support them in symptom management.

This is an issue of caring for each other after a world-changing event with consequences we are still working to understand, but it is also an economic issue. Federal reserve data show skyrocketing [rates of disability](#) in our population since 2020 among those 16 and older, and research shows about [15% of previously infected children](#), including young toddlers and preschoolers, have probable long covid. We do not know yet how growing up with long covid as

a young child will impact overall development or quality of life later. Though there are quite literally tens of thousands of studies enumerating health issues that can stem from covid infections, you would not know it by looking for mainstream media reporting or federal government public health resources.

This bill is an opportunity for Maryland to not only invest in long term interests in the health, wellbeing, and economic potential of its residents, though for that alone I am grateful. For me, this will would restore a small portion of faith in government leaders, to know that some are not willing to leave me, my family, or community behind after a catastrophic public health crisis.

I thank you for considering my testimony and urge the committee to advance HB0027.

Thank you,  
Stephanie Baker