

My name is Steven Bress. I have been a Maryland resident for much more than 50 years. I urge you to vote YES on HB1593. It is in the best interest of Participants in DDA's Self Directed Services Program.

My son Michael is a Participant in DDA's Self Directed Services (SDS) program. He has been in the SDS program for two and a half years. The SDS program is his only choice due to behavior issues. He has been asked to leave every other type of program that he has been in. Basically, Traditional Model Providers do not exist for a Participant with behaviors. His behavior has also affected his ability to retain staff in the SDS program.

Over the last couple of years, DDA has made major changes to the SDS program. These changes have impacted a wide range of topics from employee wages to training requirements for the staff members. They have also taken away services such as IFDGS, which allowed a small portion of his funding to be used for such health related items as supplements and dental visits, that are not covered by any other program. Last year they put so many restrictions on his ability to have help with the SDS program, in the form of a Day to Day Administrator, that such services are effectively not available.

All of these changes were put into effect with little warning and no effective communication, including participant feedback, as of the effective date of the announcement. The program supports, such as the Coordinator of Community Services and the Support Brokers, are not trained in advance and cannot help navigate the new rules on the day that they are effective, even if compliance with the new rules were possible to be accomplished in a day.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB1593 as it can help prevent interruptions and essentially mandatory non-compliance with rules for this very important DDA program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steven Bress
Germantown, MD