

My name is Anne Smith and I am asking you to please support and vote in favor of **HB0027**. This bill will create critical programs like the Maryland Long Covid Research Fund and support Long Covid innovation, which is severely lacking in the State of MD.

My adult daughter, Emily, got COVID at a medical appt over two years ago. She did not have a standard recovery, but instead stayed stuck in Long COVID. At the time, she was completing a graduate degree program along with her husband. Due to the life-altering impact of Long COVID and the myriad of symptoms, Emily had to drop out of the program and she and her husband moved into my home so that I could help with her care. She is homebound, lacking the energy and ability to work, attend school, church or even just read a book. Things that most other 30 year olds take for granted. She does online research when she can and has participated in several Long COVID medical trials (in other states) that have yielded little results and benefits. The medical community has no answers for her. She has a Functional doctor that we pay for out-of-pocket who spends a considerable amount of time also researching what is working and not working for Long COVID patients. This dr is out-of-pocket and using our retirement money. This wouldn't be an issue if there was a known strategy in the medical community, but because there isn't any coordinated research effort, it is like playing a very expensive whack-a-mole game, and never winning. My daughter is just one of many, many people in her Maryland Long COVID support group. They want to be productive members of society but can't. And our Maryland government has done nothing to support them.

Covid-19 has not gone away in the recent years following the initial outbreak and surge. It is still infecting many Marylanders and creating new cases of Long COVID. My daughter tells me that Annapolis is at the CDC's highest level of Covid spread- Very High. Nationally, Covid case numbers are higher now than all of 2020 and 2021. This would be a crisis if it were anything else. But COVID has become politicized. It is handled by our Federal and State government and yes, even the medical community, as no longer a threat. If we treat it as if it were nothing, then it must be so. We call that wishful thinking. Not reality.

Marylanders with Long Covid and their friends and family are desperate for help and the federal funding and care for LC research is abysmal at best. We are depending on our state leaders to care about us and fight for us. Please support **HB0027** and be the leaders and innovators that sick Marylanders deserve.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anne M Smith

St Mary's County