

**SB0392**

FAV

Bridget Collins  
Maryland State Chair  
ME Action Network Maryland  
1512 Auburn Ave  
Rockville, MD 20850

Hearing Date: February 12, 2026

Madame Chair, Mister Vice Chair, and members of the esteemed Senate Finance Committee. For the record I am Bridget Collins, Chair of #MEAction Maryland presenting Senate Bill 0392 Long Covid Innovation Grant and Loan Program.

I ask for a favorable report to help restore the lives of Marylanders affected by Long COVID. Conservative Maryland estimates show that 11-15% of people consistently develop Long COVID following a COVID-19 infection. State prevalence figures<sup>1</sup>, last issued in 2023, put 679,000 - 927,000 residents at risk for Long COVID. As SARS-COV-2 remains endemic, the number suffering has since increased without remedy.

Many of you may be aware that there has been federal funding for Long Covid. As a patient advocate on the RECOVER-TLC neurologic agents working group, I can tell you the difference this bill will make. Federal studies were mostly observational and moved at glacial pace. Patients need treatments now. SB 0392 would strengthen our economy with innovation grants to treat Marylanders with Long Covid.

Passing this legislation would enable TEDCO to function as a commission utilizing private and public funds as grants and loans to fund research accelerating the search for diagnostics- and one day, a cure. TEDCO is uniquely poised to curate and manage the Long Covid portfolio because of how they were set up by the Maryland General Assembly. This legislation was modeled on the highly successful Maryland Stem Cell Act of 2006. The Stem Cell Research Fund - which is also supported by state budget appropriations - has produced over \$230 million in projects, generated over \$525 million in economic activity in Maryland, and created over 2,000 jobs in Maryland<sup>2</sup>. Investing in Maryland's robust R & D sector is how to help bolster the economy so that there will be funds to reinvest from the budget into this legislation going forward.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Data and Analytics Tool. Maryland.gov. Published 2026. Accessed February 6, 2026.  
<https://mdat.health.maryland.gov/#>

<sup>2</sup> "Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission Launches FY26 Funding Opportunities | TEDCO." *Tedcomd.com*, 18 Nov. 2025,  
[www.tedcomd.com/news-events/press-releases/2025/maryland-stem-cell-research-commission-launches-fy26-funding](http://www.tedcomd.com/news-events/press-releases/2025/maryland-stem-cell-research-commission-launches-fy26-funding). Accessed 11 Feb. 2026.

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