



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

**SB888: Education - American Studies and Social Equity Standards Advisory Board -
Academic Standards and Model Policy
Senate Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 8, 2022
Position: Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's (Council) mission is to create change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The Arc Maryland similarly is a statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and furthering inclusion in all aspects of daily life.

We support SB 888. It will create an advisory board to examine the American Studies curriculum and to make recommendations for academic standards and school policy changes. The work of the advisory board will include recommendations to more fully recognize the history, contributions, and perspectives of ethnic and social groups to American History, including the history of people with disabilities, and contributions to American history made by people with disabilities; trailblazers for disability rights, inclusion, access, and equity. We also appreciate that the bill goes beyond curriculum and looks to school policies and factors necessary for creating equitable and welcoming school environments.

Maryland's students need to be provided with the opportunity to learn how people with disabilities were instrumental in changing history, and how they became active participants in changing societal attitudes about their needs, desires and abilities. By teaching the history of people with disabilities in schools, we are taking the necessary steps to ensure that history is not repeated and that there continues to be movement towards an even more accessible and inclusive society in future generations.

Further, we support the inclusion of a Disability Rights representative on the Advisory Board and hope that any other added members to the Advisory board have a person with "lived" experience and personal perspective on disability history.

For more information, please contact:

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