

SB0362: BRFA, Article-Health-General Section 7-101 & Section 7-409, 2/28/24
Jeneva Stone, Parent Caregiver, Self-Directed Services
UNFAVORABLE

I'm Jeneva Stone. My son Rob and I testified in favor of the Self-Directed Services Act of 2022. I'm asking you to strike Sections 7-101 & 7-409 from the BRFA, sections that would fundamentally alter this existing Maryland law that supports the community integration needs of people with disabilities. That is, their civil rights under the Olmstead Decision and the ADA.

I'm concerned that the governor has been misled into requesting a change that would work against his vision for an inclusive Maryland. Children and adults with disabilities and complex medical needs—like Rob—are a group that the state consistently leaves behind.

Our families are clustered in self-direction in part because MDH and the DDA leave us little choice: because our children have medical needs, they cannot enroll in any of the traditional provider services along with the friends with whom they attended public school. That is a form of segregation and discrimination. It's either self-direction or care in an institutional setting.

Lifting the IFDGS cap was supposed to level the playing field for Rob, allowing him full access to his own DDA budget so that he, too, could afford enrichment activities and classes that let him socialize with his disabled peers, just as he did in school—and so that he, too, could have his administrative needs met, just like his peers in traditional services. The day-to-day administrator position is a key piece of long-term sustainability for our children, after we are gone.

Don't let the DDA erect more barriers to community for Rob.