



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 21, 2024

HB 432: Courts and Judicial Proceedings and Criminal Procedure – Technical Corrections – References to Intellectual Disability

Position: **Support**



8601 Robert Fulton Dr
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046



1500 Union Avenue
Suite 2000
Baltimore, MD 21211



8835 Columbia 100 Pky
Suite P
Columbia, MD 21044



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council

217 E Redwood Street
Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202



7000 Tudsbury Road
Windsor Mill, MD 21244

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. As such, the DD Coalition supports HB 432. It is time to remove outdated language that is no longer used from Maryland law.

- In 2009, Maryland passed Rosa's Law and replaced outdated language with inclusive, person first language for people with intellectual disabilities. Rosa's Law only changed language in certain sections of Maryland law: Education, Estates and Trusts, Family Law, Health-General, Labor and Employment, State Finance and Procurement, and Transportation. The Courts and Judicial Proceedings and Criminal Procedure statutes were notably missing.
- The same year, the "Spread the Word to End the Word" campaign launched to encourage people to sign the pledge to end the "R-Word."
- In 2010, President Obama signed Rosa's Law which changed the language in US federal law.
- In 2013, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5)* included the diagnosis of intellectual disability, aligning the diagnosis terminology with more appropriate language, and the requirements in Rosa's Law.

Fifteen years later, it is time for Maryland to take the last step to eliminate the use of the outdated, medical language that is too often used as an insult. We support HB 432, and the effort to eliminate language that is no longer used. Continuing to remove old references helps decrease any harmful effects and social stigma associated with the term.

Contact:

Rachel London, Executive Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
rlondon@md-council.org