



INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COMMISSION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Dr. James Bridgers
Director

January 30, 2025

Senate Committee on Budget & Taxation
Maryland General Assembly
100 Maryland State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

House Committee on Appropriations
Maryland General Assembly
100 Maryland State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Montgomery County Delegation
Maryland General Assembly
100 Maryland State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senate Committee on Budget & Taxation, House Committee on Appropriations and Montgomery County Delegates:

On behalf of the Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission (IDDC), we write in strenuous opposition to the draconian budget cuts being proposed to Maryland's intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) services. We respectfully request that your Committee reject the cuts and restore funding for the vital services upon which Marylanders with IDD and their families depend.

Montgomery County is home to thousands of children and adults with IDD. They and their families are terrified by the depth of the proposed cuts, which will directly and irrevocably eviscerate the service system and place vulnerable Marylanders in immediate jeopardy. In addition, the proposed cuts will exacerbate the well-documented IDD workforce crisis, making it even more difficult to attract and retain top talent for this meaningful and essential work, ultimately reducing system capacity and jeopardizing the stability of critical services upon which Marylanders with IDD depend every day.

The proposed cuts represent approximately 22% of the Maryland IDD system's total funding. The proposed elimination of longstanding geographic differential rates paid to service providers in high-cost regions of the State (Montgomery, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert and Frederick Counties) will have a significant negative impact on IDD service providers—and, far more critically, on the people with IDD they serve. These counties face significantly higher living costs compared to other areas in Maryland, including housing, transportation, and operational expenses. Additional reductions in rates in self-directed supports (SDS), especially in Montgomery County, will have a significant negative impact on the availability of quality direct support professionals and thus people with IDD will lose services.

Cuts to “dedicated supports”, which are services that are provided only to people with particularly complex or significant medical, behavioral and/or psychiatric needs, will place the health and safety of many people with IDD in immediate jeopardy. Many individuals who receive dedicated supports require 24/7 direct support literally to stay alive. The proposed change will reduce the quality of supports by limiting providers' ability to tailor services to individual needs, ultimately restricting person-centered flexibility in service delivery and diminishing the responsiveness essential for high-quality, individualized care.

IDDC Letter to Maryland General Assembly

We are shocked and dismayed that the IDD community, including most importantly Marylanders with IDD, their families, community providers and advocates, were not consulted or engaged in any dialogue of any kind about the proposed cuts. Nor has any impact analysis of the proposed cuts been performed. Before drastic cuts are made, their real-life impact on individuals with IDD and their families must be made clear.

According to the results of a Washington Post-University of Maryland poll released January 31st, fully 74% of Maryland voters oppose the proposed budget cuts to services for Marylanders with IDD.

Maryland's budget must not be balanced on the backs of Marylanders with IDD. The Montgomery County IDDC opposes the proposed cuts to the IDD system and the haphazard manner of their implementation scheduled as soon as April 1, 2025. Please reject the proposed cuts and restore funding for critical services for Marylanders with I/DD. Their lives are in the balance.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen F. Riley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephen F Riley, Chair

About the Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission

In 2023, the Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission (IDDC) was created by County legislation to advise the County Executive and the County Council on matters of importance to the I/DD community. Its enabling legislation also authorizes the Commission to advocate at the State and federal levels of government to promote the interests of individuals with I/DD.

Membership of the Montgomery County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission

Patrick (Rick) Callahan

Karla Nabors

Jillian Copeland

Margaret Parrott

Tracy Craig

Stephen (Steve) Riley

Jake Didinsky

Eric Salzano

Onesta Duke

Carmen Smith

Justin Hack

Smil Soria

Susan Hartung

Yvonne VanLowe

Dorne Hill

John Whittle

Jenn Lynn Kerwin

Najla Wortham

Lisa Lorraine

Carmen Zahra

Lori Mitchell-Keller