**Independent Living Legislation**

**2021 Legislative Session**

**Key:**

**Green- Submitted testimony**

**Blue- Signed on to existing testimony**

**Red- No action taken**

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| Bill # | Platform Area | Status | Title | Description | Impact |
| SB384/HB652 | Healthcare/ Long Term Supports and Services | Favorable with amendments in Finance,  Pending in House | Guidance and Reporting for Residential Service Agencies (RSAs) | Requiring the Office of the Attorney General, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Department of Labor, to produce a guidance document, by December 30, 2021, concerning the application of employee protection laws to personal care aides employed by residential service agencies; providing for the content and structure of the report; requiring a residential service agency to certify certain information through the signature of a certain individual as a condition of obtaining or renewing a license; etc. | Personal care aides receive low wages. When an agency is allowed to classify the personal care aids as a contractor, it means that the aide has to be on the hook for all of the payroll taxes and they are not eligible for benefits. This legislation would work to combat the issue of classifying employees incorrectly and therefore ensure equity among the personal care aide workforce. |
| SB454/HB52 | Housing | Feb 17 @ 1:30 p.m. House Judiciary Hearing, Feb 9 @ 1 p.m Senate Judicial Proceedings Hearing | Real Property - Alterations in Actions for Repossession and Establishment of Eviction Diversion Program | Establishing the Eviction Diversion Program in the District Court to reduce the incidence of judgments for repossession of residential property and to promote continuity of housing; requiring the Chief Judge of the District Court to establish a Program in a District Court sitting in a county that processed 10,000 or more claims for repossession of residential property in fiscal year 2019; requiring that a landlord provide a certain written statement to a tenant within 5 days of receiving a certain request from the tenant; etc. | o Requires early resort to rental assistance before suing to evict;  o Establishes a formal two-phase proceeding and Eviction Diversion Program that enable renters and landlords to engage financial and legal services and help judges to order alternative dispute resolution where appropriate;  o Provides renters time to seek counsel, to raise a defense, and to prepare for trial;  o Gives judges broader power to delay eviction in emergency situations - allowing time for renters to recover from critical health problems and to utilize financial assistance to relocate when necessary. |
| SB154/HB18 | Housing | Feb 17 @ 1:30 p.m. House Judiciary Hearing, Jan 28 @ 11 am Senate Judicial Proceedings Hearing | Landlord and Tenant – Eviction Action – Right to Counsel | Establishing that certain individuals have a right to legal representation in eviction proceedings; establishing the Right to Counsel in Evictions Coordinator to organize and direct services and resources to provide covered individuals with legal representation for a judicial or administrative proceeding; providing for the legal representation of certain individuals in certain proceedings and civil matters by certain organizations; providing for outreach and education regarding tenants' rights by certain community groups; etc. | o Provides low-income renters a right to a lawyer (“right to counsel’) in eviction cases.  o Right to counsel empirically reduces housing displacement and stands to save the state significant costs. According to one study, an investment of $5.7 million in right to counsel in evictions, in Baltimore City, would save the State $18.1 million in Medicaid and foster care spending alone. |
| SB530/HB729 | Housing | Feb 26 @ 2pm Senate Judicial Proceedings Hearing, Feb 17 @ 1:30 House Judiciary Hearing | Landlord and Tenant - Eviction Actions - Filing Surcharge and Prohibited Lease Provisions | Increasing, from not more than $18 to not less than $120, the surcharge that the District Court is required to assess per civil case for summary ejectment, tenant holding over, and breach of lease that seeks a judgment for possession of residential property against a residential tenant; requiring the District Court to assess the surcharge against a landlord and prohibiting the court from awarding or assigning the surcharge against a residential tenant; etc. | o Establishes an eviction surcharge that effectively raises Maryland courts’ rock-bottom $15 court fee for evictions to the national average of $120.   The surcharge incentivizes landlords to work with renters on repayment.   It also stands to lower the state’s extraordinary volume of eviction litigation.   Decreasing the volume of eviction litigation will reduce rental debt and negative effects on credit and tenant screening. It will also relieve state courts and free up tax revenue to be used on court infrastructure or services.  o Prohibits the pass-through of the eviction surcharge onto renters.  o Directs surcharge revenue to funding for civil legal services. |
| SB168/HB209 | Healthcare | Jan 26 at 1:30 p.m. in HGO, Jan 26 at 1:00 p.m in Finance | Public Health - Maryland Suicide Fatality Review Committee | Establishing the Maryland Suicide Fatality Review Committee, also referred to as the State Team, to identify and address the factors contributing to suicide deaths and facilitate system changes in the State to prevent suicides; requiring the Committee to meet at least quarterly each year, report at least annually to the Governor and the General Assembly, perform certain annual studies, and disseminate certain findings and recommendations to policymakers, health care providers, health care facilities, and the public; etc. | HB 209 establishes the Maryland Suicide Fatality Review Committee to examine the factors contributing to suicide deaths. The Committee will study trends, risk factors, best practices, lapses in response, and barriers to safety. The team must meet quarterly and make recommendation on policy or law changes to both the Governor and the General Assembly. Studies and findings will be disseminated to policymakers, health care providers, health care facilities, and the public. For context, a similar committee was created in Oregon. Through this process, they found a high number of people dropped their dogs off at a shelter prior to committing suicide. After identifying this trend, the state began training staff members at animal shelters which created another opportunity for intervention. |
| HB565/SB514 | Healthcare | Feb 16 at 1:30 p.m. in HGO, Feb 25 at 1:00 p.m. in Finance | Health Facilities - Hospitals - Medical Debt Protection | Requiring a hospital to submit annually a certain report to the Health Services Cost Review Commission at a certain time; requiring the Commission to post the information in the report on its website; altering the required contents of a hospital's policy on the collection of debts owed by patients; requiring a hospital to provide a refund of certain amounts collected from a patient or the guarantor of a patient who was found eligible for reduced-cost care on the date of service; etc. | Prohibits hospitals from placing a lien on a  patient's home or car. Prohibits hospitals from pursuing wage or bank garnishment to collect medical debt if a patient is uninsured. Requires hospitals to offer monthly payment plans to patients, limit monthly payments to 5% of gross monthly income, and cap interest rates at 1.5% per year. Prohibit hospitals from filing lawsuits to collect on low-value debts of $1,000 or less. |
| HB245 | Voting | Jan 19 at 1:30pm in Ways and Means | Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance | Requiring that certain training materials used by the program of instruction for election judges include oral and written instruction in certain methods an election judge may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting; requiring the State Board of Elections to develop a sign stating the various methods election judges may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters; and requiring that a certain sign be a certain size and posted prominently at the entrance of each polling site. | Requires training materials for election judges, including methods of assistance or accommodation for people  with disabilities and older adults. It also requires a sign be placed at each polling site.  What are the benefits:   Promotes inclusion for people with disabilities.   Provides election judges with tools to help support people with disabilities and older adults. |
| HB153 | Voting | 1/26 at 1:30 p.m. in Ways and Means | Election Law - Elections by Mail | Requiring each local board of elections to send by nonforwardable mail, a vote-by-mail ballot to each individual who is registered to vote as of the 21st day before the day of each election; requiring that vote-by-mail ballots be mailed at a certain time; requiring a voter to take certain actions to vote a vote-by-mail ballot; requiring that the instructions provided with each vote-by-mail ballot include a certain warning; etc. | Requires each local board of elections to send a vote-by-mail ballot to everyone who is registered to vote.  What are the benefits:   Increases privacy.   Improves access to the right to vote for people with disabilities |
| HB423/SB271 | Voting | 2/02 at 1:30 p.m. in Ways and Means, 2/18 at 11:00 a.m. in Health, Education, and Environmental Affairs | Election Law - Voting Systems - Accessibility for Voters With Disabilities | Requiring each voter to use a ballot marking device that is accessible to voters with disabilities to vote at early voting centers and election day polling places to ensure that access is provided to voters with disabilities in accordance with a certain provision of law; applying the Act to all elections beginning with the statewide primary election held under a certain provision of law in 2022; etc. | Requires each voter to use a ballot marking device that is accessible to voters with disabilities to vote at an  early voting center or an Election Day polling place.  What are the benefits:   Increases privacy and protections if everyone uses a ballot marking device.   Improves access to the right to vote for people with disabilities because all ballot marking devices will be accessible. |
| HB 155/ SB98 | Education | 1/27 at 1:30 p.m. in Ways and Means, 1/28 at 11:00 a.m. in Judicial Proceedings | County Boards and Public and Nonpublic Prekindergarten Programs and Schools - Discrimination - Prohibition | Prohibiting a county board, public prekindergarten program or primary or secondary school, or nonpublic prekindergarten program or primary or secondary school that receives State funds from discriminating against a person, refusing enrollment of, expelling, or withholding privileges from any student or prospective student, or taking certain retaliatory actions on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; providing certain penalties; etc. | Protects all students, Prekindergarten-21, who are enrolled in public schools and in schools receiving  public funding from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status,  sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.  • Private schools that don’t receive federal funds don’t have to comply with Section 504 of the  Rehabilitation Act. Private schools run by religious organizations don’t have to comply with the  Americans with Disabilities Act.  • If Maryland is going to use state funds to provide scholarships for students to attend private schools, those schools should protect students’ civil rights. |
| HB90/SB687 | Housing | 1/26 at 1:30 p.m. in Environment | State and Local Housing Programs – Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing | Requiring the Department of Housing and Community Development to report to the General Assembly and the Governor by December 1 each year on the total of households receiving certain financial assistance disaggregated by race, disability status, and income; requiring the Department to administer its programs related to housing and community development to affirmatively further fair housing and prohibiting the Department from taking any action that is materially inconsistent with the duty to affirmatively further fair housing; etc. | The AFFH Rule is necessary to ensure ALL people throughout this country have access to housing, free from illegal discrimination, and that residents of all neighborhoods are connected to the kinds of opportunities they need to flourish. |
| HB 97/SB 66 | Digital Equity | House Economic 1/26 at 1:30 p.m., Hearing 2/09 at 1:00 p.m. (Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs) | Department of Housing and Community Development - Office of Digital Inclusion - Established (Digital Connectivity Act of 2021) | Establishing the Office of Digital Inclusion in the Department of Housing and Community Development to ensure that every resident of the State is supported by high-quality broadband Internet service at an affordable price, and has the tools necessary to use and take advantage of the Internet; requiring the Governor to appoint the Director of the Office; requiring the Office to develop, by July 1, 2022, a statewide plan to ensure all State residents have the ability to connect to reliable broadband Internet by December 31, 2029; etc. | Will ensure that people with disabilities will get access to high speed internet. |
| HB 114/SB 199 | Transporation/Transit | House - Hearing 2/03 at 1:30 p.m. in Appropriations, Senate - Hearing 1/27 at 1:00 p.m. in Budget and Taxation | Maryland Transit Administration - Funding (Transit Safety and Investment Act) | Requiring the Governor to include certain appropriations in the State budget from the Transportation Trust Fund to the Maryland Transit Administration for certain operating and capital needs in certain fiscal years; authorizing the reduction of certain appropriations under certain circumstances; requiring that certain capital appropriations be in addition to capital funds appropriated for the Purple Line; requiring the Administration to submit a certain report annually; declaring the intent of the General Assembly; etc. | Ensure access to transportation that is reliable and works to meet the needs of people with disabilities. |
| HB 247 | Voting | House – 3rd reading passed | Election Law - Voting Order Priority - Individuals Who Need Extra Assistance | Requiring a chief election judge to give voting order priority to individuals with certain mobility problems, individuals assisting others who have mobility problems, or an individual accompanied by a child with a disability; authorizing certain individuals to request voting order priority of any election judge serving at a polling place or early voting center; and requiring the State Board of Elections to adopt certain regulations. |  |
| SB307 | Employment | Favorable Report in Senate Finance | Labor and Employment - Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program | Establishing the Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program in the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning within the Maryland Department of Labor; requiring the Division to provide certain matching grants to certain entities to create and expand on successful recruitment and retention strategies that address certain barriers to increasing the population of direct care workers; requiring the Governor to include a $250,000 appropriation in the annual budget bill for the Program; etc. | Ensures a high quality direct support workforce |
| SB610 |  | Hearing 2/25 at 1:00 p.m. in Senate Finance | Lodging Establishments – Accessible Rooms for Individuals With Disabilities – Deadlines | Altering the dates by which certain percentages of accessible rooms in a lodging establishment are required to be furnished with a bed of a certain height. | This bill extends the timeline for compliance to another year. |
| HB1020 | Voting | House - Hearing 3/09 at 1:30 p.m. in Ways and Means | Election Law – Curbside Voting – Establishment | Providing that voters are eligible for curbside voting under certain circumstances; requiring that curbside voting be made available to all registered voters with disabilities recognized under a certain federal law; requiring each local board of elections to establish a location outside each polling place for curbside voting; requiring that a curbside voting location meet certain requirements; requiring that an election judge give a certain voter a paper ballot or, under certain circumstances, a handheld voting device; etc. | Ensures that voting is accessible to those who may not be able to vote in person easily. |
| HB1216 |  | Hearing cancelled | Human Relations - Public Accommodation Discrimination - Enforcement and Remedies | Authorizing complainants, respondents, and the Commission on Civil Rights to elect to have claims of public accommodation discrimination determined in a civil action brought by the Commission under certain circumstances and subject to certain requirements; requiring the remedy for public accommodation discrimination to include the greater of certain damages; authorizing the remedy for public accommodation discrimination to include certain remedies; etc. | This will assist people with disabilities in ensuring they are being appropriately provided with reasonable accomodations and it gives them a recourse if not. |
| HB656 | Voting | Hearing 2/09 at 1:30 p.m. in Ways and Means | Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Accessibility by Public Transportation | Requiring that, in a county that has fixed-route public transportation service, each early voting center must be located not more than 500 feet from a public transportation station or stop. | People with disabilities who rely on public transit would benefit from ensuring that early voting centers are accessible to them. |
| HB69 |  | Hearing 2/17 at 1:30 p.m. (Economic Matters) | Environment - Single-Use Plastics - Restrictions | Prohibiting, beginning January 1, 2022, a food service business from providing certain single-use food or beverage products to a certain customer unless requested by the customer; requiring a food service business to maintain a limited supply of certain single-use food and beverage products for certain customers; prohibiting, beginning January 1, 2024, an owner, an operator, or a manager of a lodging establishment with 51 or more rooms from providing certain personal cleansing products in small plastic bottles; etc. | Contains changes to allow for people with disabilities to obtain straws upon request and training/outreach |
| HB939 | Education | Hearing 2/17 at 1:30 p.m. (Ways and Means) | Education - Student Education Grant Program - Established | Establishing the Student Education Grant Program in the State Department of Education to provide grants to eligible students in the State to attend an open nonpublic school approved to operate in the State; providing for the renewal of a grant from the Program; requiring the Department to establish an application process for the Program; requiring the Department to distribute grants; providing for the amount of each grant under the Program; etc. | Private Schools don't have to honor the extra support  students may need through an IEP. Unless they commit to  following the IDEA and ensure admissions applications and  protocols do not discriminate against children with IEPs who  need additional support, they should not be able to access  these grants. |