

**Testimony**  
**Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2112**  
**House Human Services Committee**  
**Representative Matthew Ruby, Chairman**  
March 18, 2025

Chairman Ruby, and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Tina Bay, Director of the Developmental Disabilities Section with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department). I appear before you in support of Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2112, which was introduced at the request of the Department.

While I do not oppose this proposed change, I do have concerns regarding the potential impact this will have on the developmental disabilities (DD) system. Many of the eligible individuals residing at the Life Skills and Transition Center are vulnerable, and it is possible that the co-mingling of these populations may present challenges. Additionally, given the pressures the DD system is already facing, I have concerns about how this change may impact the overall availability of capacity for individuals who are eligible and in need of crisis services. It will be important to carefully consider the potential strain on resources to ensure that these critical services remain accessible to those in urgent need.

It is important to emphasize that the goal of the Department is to serve all children, both DD-eligible and non-DD-eligible, in the least restrictive environment possible. However, due to the limited availability of private providers willing to serve these most complex cases through ups and downs that are the reality for individuals with multi-layered needs, we believe that this proposed solution represents the best available approach at this time.

We know one of the challenges faced by Life Skills Transition Center today, as they serve youth with a variety of complex care needs, is the lack of meaningful opportunities for a non-institutional but longer-term structured residential option after the need for crisis and stabilization services has been met.

To address this gap in the continuum of service options, the Department is in the process of piloting a host home model that will be available to youth with developmental disabilities. This pilot is expected to launch later this year, using one-time funds available through the 10 percent Home and Community-Based Services Capacity Fund (CMS Section 9817). Host homes are modeled in part after the philosophy of therapeutic foster care. It is a family setting where the provider is recruited specifically to serve the youth's unique needs, with extensive training and service supports attached to the home. There will be no requirement that a child be in public custody; the pilot will explore opportunities for bio families to share residential time with the designated host home. We believe this model will provide an effective option for supporting youth and their families as they transition from the urgent need for crisis and stabilization to a longer-term service alternative. The host home model will allow children to remain close to their families while focusing on reunification and ensuring that both the child and their family receive the appropriate level of care and support.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.