

**Testimony on Behalf of County Executive Marc Elrich
on Bill 10-23, Health – Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission - Established**

Good afternoon, my name is Ken Hartman-Espada, Director of Strategic Partnerships in the office of the County Executive. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of County Executive Elrich in support of Bill 10-23 to establish an Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission.

Mr. Elrich is very appreciative of the partnership with Councilmember Albornoz and his staff in working with him, the Commission for People with Disabilities, Department of Health and Human Services staff, and the families and guardians of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (or IDD) to bring this Bill forward.

County Executive Elrich was here with you this morning to commemorate National Developmental Disability Awareness Month. As you know, the County Executive is a parent of an adult foster child with IDD.

My sister and I recently became the guardians of my older brother with IDD. It is very frustrating and challenging to identify and obtain services if you don't know where to start or even what resources are available to you. It is easy to get stuck. I am grateful for the guidance Mr. Elrich provided to me when I was stuck.

The creation of an IDD Commission will help people - like me and many others – to learn about available services, navigate the complex process, and advocate for the needs of our loved ones.

The IDD Commission will bring together individuals with IDD; family members, guardians, and support staff; service providers and service agencies; and the Commission on People with Disabilities to:

- Promote direct communication among families, support staff, private and public organizations, and the public;
- Conduct educational programs;
- Report on gaps in services and research best practices and innovations in services, and;
- Advocate at the County and State level on the needs of County residents with IDD.

County Executive Elrich asks the Council to unanimously support Bill 10-23. He thanks Councilmember Albornoz for his leadership -- and he is committed to providing the staff support, both administratively and programmatic, necessary for the new Commission to perform its duties.

We look forward to working with the HHS committee and the Council on passing this important measure and establishing this new Commission. Thank you.