



**2023 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: SB 421 – State Personnel – Teleworking Programs, Policies, and Guidelines – Requirements
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
POSITION: Letter of Information
BILL ANALYSIS: SB 421 establishes certain requirements for each teleworking program, policy, and guideline adopted by a certain appropriate official in State government.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) provides a letter of information for SB 421. All local health departments (LHDs) have instituted teleworking arrangements for select employees. Health Officers appreciate the advantages of teleworking for certain staff and worked to make this option available to those whose job positions are suited for remote work. However, many positions at LHDs require in-person service to best aid members of our communities. There are health services that cannot be provided remotely, and since those LHDs assist skew toward lower income, a disproportionate percentage of our clientele are unable to access the help they need online.

We ask the Finance Committee to **reconsider** the following section of SB 421 found on **Page 4, Lines 1-5:**

(V) PROHIBIT AN APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL FROM DENYING AN APPLICATION TO TELEWORK ON THE BASIS THAT THE EMPLOYEE IS UNABLE TO PERFORM THE EMPLOYEE’S DUTIES AWAY FROM THE EMPLOYEE’S WORKPLACE IF ANOTHER EMPLOYEE IN THE SAME JOB POSITION OR CLASSIFICATION IS FOUND ELIGIBLE TO TELEWORK

The state’s Human Resources system is a patchwork of job classifications that in many cases lump disparate duties under a single hodgepodge umbrella. Nurses, community health workers, therapists, and many other classifications perform their work in a variety of contexts some of which are appropriate for telework while others are not. The above noted section of SB 421 would either:

- 1) Force LHDs to allow employees to telework regardless of negative impacts this arrangement has on their ability to perform their duties simply because another employee in the same classification, but with very different responsibilities, was granted telework status; or
- 2) Have the unintended effect of denying appropriate employees telework status out of concern that this would force managers to grant matching arrangements to others in the same job position or classification regardless of the negative consequences.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of information for SB 421. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at рмаiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433.