

KATIE FRY HESTER
Legislative District 9
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Education, Energy, and
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on
Cybersecurity, Information Technology
and Biotechnology



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 304
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3671 · 301-858-3671
800-492-7122 Ext. 3671
KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of SB957 - Labor and Employment—Automated Employment Decision Tools—Prohibition

March 14, 2024

Chairman Beidle, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 957, which seeks to address the potential risks associated with the use of automated employment decision tools in the hiring process.

The use of automated employment decision tools raises concerns about potential bias and discrimination. If not carefully designed, these tools have the potential to perpetuate existing biases in hiring data, leading to unfair outcomes for underrepresented groups. This bill seeks to reduce the potential for misuse or lack of transparency in the use of automated employment decision tools. The bill's prohibitions and notification requirements aim to establish safeguards and accountability in the use of automation in employment decisions, ensuring that applicants are informed and protected from the potential negative consequences of automated decision-making processes.

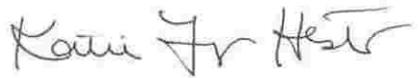
This bill will specifically:

- Prohibit employers from using automated decision tools to screen applicants for employment or to decide compensation or other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment in the state if that system has not undergone an annual impact assessment.
- Require employers to notify each applicant within 30 days after the use of an automated decision tool, providing information about its use and the assessed job qualifications or characteristics of the applicant.
- Establish civil penalties for employers violating the notification requirement, ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Act.

SB957 is a commitment to fostering a workplace that embraces technological advancement and ethical responsibility, with trust as a foundational value. This bill prioritizes the rights of job applicants, upholds diversity, and promotes fairness and equity in all employment decisions.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB957.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester
Howard and Montgomery Counties