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Economic Matters Committee

HB 312: Discrimination in Employment - Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants With Disabilities

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Position: Support

As the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for Maryland and the grantee of the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS), Disability Rights Maryland (DRM), formerly Maryland Disability Law Center, is charged with removing barriers to employment for beneficiaries with disabilities. Pursuant to this mandate, DRM seeks to protect beneficiaries' rights regarding conditions of employment and help beneficiaries understand and protect their employment rights, responsibilities and reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable laws.

DRM supports HB 312 which would require employers make reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities including: 1) allowing for an online application process; 2) accepting an alternate form of a resume, such as video; 3) allowing support personnel or others to provide assistance to an applicant; or 4) provide an accessible interview location.

People with disabilities in Maryland are unemployed and underemployed to a greater extent than the general population. In 2015, the employment rate for working-age people with disabilities in Maryland was 42.4% while Maryland's overall unemployment rate was 4.1%. This law would ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else. Requiring employers make reasonable accommodations for the application / interview process will help empower Marylanders with disabilities. Access to accommodations and supports are the keys to employment that pays a livable wage. Unlocking the path to full participation in community life. HB 312 would help facilitate employment for people with disabilities. As a result, it is likely to increase access to job opportunities, community access, and increase overall quality of life for disabled Marylanders.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

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