

## Support

### HB 312

#### **Discrimination in Employment - Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants With Disabilities**

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My name is Michael K. McLaughlin, I live in Laurel with my wife Jackie and our adult daughter Erin, who has Down syndrome.

Erin is 22 and exited the public school system last year. Having left the special education system, which can be overwhelming, we are now entering the even-scarier world of adult services. Scarier because this is where we must begin to let go, and prepare Erin for a life without us.

As all parents hope for their children, Jackie and I hope that Erin will live a fulfilling, independent and self-supporting life. The progress that our state has made integrating people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in schools and communities makes Erin's self-support more of a realistic goal than even a couple of decades ago.

As Erin begins job training and job searches, legislation like HB 312 becomes very personal. For example, although she was a late-talker as a child, Erin is quite verbal. In fact, now she is still learning the fine art of not interrupting. Yet she has intelligibility issues; often people not familiar with her speech patterns can have trouble understanding her. So Erin would benefit from having a job coach who is familiar with her speech accompany her in job interviews to help facilitate communication if necessary.

We can all be proud that Maryland continues to move away from institutionalization and toward community and natural supports for people with IDD. Previous progressive state legislation has helped create a welcoming community atmosphere for people with disabilities that fosters independence and self-sufficiency.

Common sense bills like HB 312 will help our state continue that progress toward treating all of its citizens with equal dignity and support.

Please vote for the passage of HB 312