

# Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program

## Testimony on SB867

### Equal Love for Employees with Disabilities Act

Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Chair Kelley and the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Benjamin Temin, and I'm a resident of Baltimore City. I am a certified work-incentives planner who works with social security disability beneficiaries who are seeking to enter or re-enter the workforce. This population is greatly impacted by the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program.

SB867 amends the requirements for EID eligibility under The Maryland Department of Health. Under the current eligibility criteria, enrollees face restrictive limits on earnings from wages, saving responsibly, and loving freely. Existing rules punish employed Marylanders with disabilities wishing to pursue marriage and force enrollees requiring Medicaid services to retire at age 65 years old.

When individuals receiving social security consider employment, one of the main concerns is maintaining health coverage. There are many factors which discourage them from participating in the workforce, and EID is one of the best programs to encourage them to seek employment with confidence. However, for those over age 65 it is not an option. More and more older Americans need and want to work, and they often have higher medical expenses. The more SSA beneficiaries are gainfully employed, the burden on SSA and other public entitlements are reduced.

The "Equal Love for Employees with Disabilities Act" bill allows employed Marylanders with Disabilities to have a quality and fulfilling work and family life. SB867 affords Employed Individuals with Disabilities, meaningful opportunities for competitive career advancements and marriage, without the fear of losing medical benefits.

In January 2022, New Jersey Governor Murphy signed S3455/A5262 into law nearly identical eligibility requirements within the NJ Workability Program.

I respectfully urge this committee to demonstrate its commitment to Employed Marylanders with Disabilities by **issuing a favorable report to SB867**.

Sincerely,

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