



DATE: February 7, 2023 **COMMITTEE:** Economic Matters
BILL NO: House Bill 17
BILL TITLE: Employment Standards - Retail Establishments - Seating for Employees
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Houser Bill 17 - Employment Standards - Retail Establishments - Seating for Employees.

Bill Summary:

House Bill 17 requires a retail employer of 20 or more employees to provide a suitable seat for an employee if the nature of the work that the employee performs can reasonably be performed while seated.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger's Neurodiversity at Work program takes a multi-faceted approach to hiring and retaining individuals of all abilities as part of the workforce. Neurodiversity at Work is a collective impact initiative designed to create and support gainful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing economic benefit for businesses and the larger community. The Neurodiversity at Work program fosters integrated workplace settings where all individuals can experience success and independence. Currently the program includes several specialty initiatives Project SEARCH, CORE Foundations a Developmental Disabilities Administration Licensed Agency, HR pathways hiring program, training and education services, legislative efforts, research, transition consultation services, and planning for a national conference and on-going events.

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an inclusive employer that believes that individuals with disabilities have the skills, talents, and drive to contribute significantly to the workforce and to the broader community. A neurodiverse workforce benefits all.

Rationale:

Individuals with disabilities want to be, and have become, productive members of the workforce. As a provider of employment services, we choose hiring practices that support growth and retention based on an individual's qualifications. **Inclusive workplace practices, like the provision of seating for employees, increases employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, and provides a skilled job seeker an employment opportunity that they may otherwise have not been able to consider.** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates a business to accommodate an individual with disabilities' need to sit. However, this legislation will support statewide efforts for more disability awareness and more inclusive hiring practices and create a standard of business practices that supports all employees.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 17.