



HB 1222: State Department of Education — Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)-Funding & Staffing

Written Testimony of Mary Manzoni, CEO, Maryland Works

Presented to Ways & Means Committee

March 8, 2023

Position: Support

Good afternoon, Madam Chair & Honorable Members of the House Ways & Means Committee:

My name is Mary Manzoni. I serve as CEO of Maryland Works. Maryland Works is a statewide association of non-profit community service providers and individual workforce development professionals who provide job training, employment, and business ownership opportunities for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment. On behalf of our board of directors, I urge you to support HB 1222. This is extremely important if we want to provide individuals with disabilities the services that will assist them with preparing and obtaining employment-JOBS-CAREERS.

The current state funding mechanism does not assure that there is enough funding in the state annual budget to get the full federal match on the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) funds for which it is eligible each year. Additionally, over the years DORS has lost a number of PINS, which has resulted in a waiting list for individuals with disabilities who want to go to work.

Maryland Works has had the privilege of working closely with DORS for many years in our mission to support the employment of individuals with disabilities. Ensuring that DORS is staffed adequately is extremely crucial in efficiently and effectively carrying out the important work that DORS does to support our state, economy, and the needs of individuals with disabilities. The unemployment rate among Marylanders with disabilities is about 40%. The services, support, and programs that DORS provides help this untapped labor pool get jobs. DORS needs state resources and funds to be included in the budget effective July 1, 2023, to ensure that the state receives federal matching funds.

Your support of HB 1222 would benefit individuals with disabilities by:

Requiring the Governor to include in the annual budget bill, beginning in fiscal year 2025, certain appropriations to the Division of Rehabilitation Services in the State Department of Education in accordance



with certain federal acts and sufficient to employ 74 staff members in the Division.

On behalf of our entire organization, we thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony and urge your favorable report on HB 1222.

Very respectfully,

Mary Manzoni

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mary Manzoni'.

Chief Executive Officer

Maryland Works