

CRAIG J. ZUCKER  
Legislative District 14  
Montgomery County



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 122  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3625 · 301-858-3625  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3625  
Fax 410-841-3618 · 301-858-3618  
Craig.Zucker@senate.state.md.us

Budget and Taxation Committee  
Chair, Capital Budget Subcommittee

Chair, Senate Democratic Caucus

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Craig J. Zucker  
Senate Bill 859/House Bill 1163 - State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation  
Services- Funding  
Appropriations Committee  
March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
1:00 PM  
Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and distinguished members of the committee. It is my pleasure to testify today in **support of Senate Bill 859 - State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services - Funding.**

Senate Bill 859 is in the same posture as the cross-file, House Bill 1163, both of which passed their chambers unanimously. This bill authorizes the Governor to include funding in the annual budget for the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to receive its fully allotted share of federal vocational rehabilitation grant funding. DORS is an agency of the Maryland State Department of Education and is composed of the public vocational rehabilitation employment services program and the Disability Determination Services. Through various programs, DORS prepares people with disabilities for the world of work by offering career assessment services, career and skills training, job placement assistance, assistive technology services and support services.

Under federal regulations, to receive full funding, a state must contribute 21.3% of funding for vocational programs and maintain at least its prior year funding amount for the program. During the 2022 legislative session, the General Assembly passed legislation establishing a State commission to study DORS. The commission subsequently produced a report in which it recommended ensuring in state statute the funding provisions required under federal regulations.

Senate Bill 859 ensures federal funding for employment services in Maryland, improves service delivery, and will greatly reduce the waitlist to receive services to rehabilitate and place individuals with disabilities into gainful employment and to function more independently.

For these reasons, **I urge the committee for a favorable report on Senate Bill 859.** Thank you for your kind consideration.