



EMPLOY PRINCE GEORGE'S
1801 McCormick Drive, Suite 400,
Largo, Maryland 20774
www.employpg.org
(301) 618-8400

Walter L. Simmons, President

Bill Number: House Bill 502
Title: Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative – Established
Committee: Appropriations
Hearing Date: February 4, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE

Employ Prince George's, Inc. ("EPG") is a nonprofit organization that serves as the principal workforce development entity for Prince George's County and is responsible for regulating policy development and the administration of workforce activities related to services and programs funded by the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA).

As the workforce development engine for Prince George's County, we are committed to fostering career pathways and ensuring that all individuals, including those with disabilities, have access to equitable employment opportunities. House Bill 502 is a critical step toward ensuring that the State of Maryland leads by example in promoting the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

Employment is a cornerstone of economic self-sufficiency and community engagement. Unfortunately, people with disabilities continue to face significant disparities in employment rates, often due to misconceptions about their capabilities, inaccessible hiring practices, and a lack of supportive workplace accommodations. By institutionalizing disability employment advancement within state government, HB 502 will ensure that Maryland sets a precedent for equitable hiring practices, workforce inclusion, and career mobility for individuals with disabilities.

The benefits of this initiative extend beyond state employment. By positioning Maryland as a leader in disability employment, this legislation will encourage private-sector employers to adopt similar practices, ultimately strengthening Maryland's workforce and economy. Investing in disability-inclusive employment policies will not only diversify our workplaces but also leverage the talents and contributions of a population that is often underutilized yet highly capable.

EPG has witnessed firsthand how targeted workforce strategies can transform lives. Through initiatives such as customized job training, employer engagement, and career navigation services, we have helped countless individuals with disabilities secure sustainable employment. However, systemic change is needed to break down barriers on a larger scale. HB 502 represents that systemic change.

For these reasons, EPG respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 502.