



*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary*

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Ben Barnes  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
120 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: House Bill 502 - Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative - Established - Letter of Support**

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members:

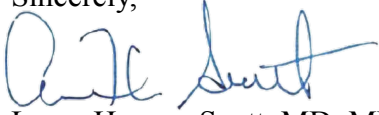
The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 502 - Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative - Established. HB 502 would create an office in the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to support employment for people with disabilities, and would create an initiative to promote employment of people with disabilities in State government.

In its programs for people with disabilities, including the 1915(c) Medicaid waiver programs operated by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), which particularly serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the Department emphasizes the importance of competitive, integrated employment. DDA currently funds services such as career development and exploration, as well as ongoing supports, to promote employment opportunities for all individuals in services who want to seek employment in their communities. The Department welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with MDOD in the further promotion of employment for people with disabilities in the State.

Further, Maryland is an Employment First state, meaning that Maryland supports the principles that all people have the right to explore the full range of employment options, and that all people have the right to earn a living wage in a job of their choosing, based on their unique talents, gifts, skills, and interests. State government employment within Maryland should take the lead in promoting these values, and the employment of individuals with disabilities in State government is a key step towards achieving employment equality and community integration. For these reasons, the Department supports the passage of HB 502.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs, at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Laura Herrera Scott, MD, MPH  
Secretary