

## APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

### TESTIMONY OF DISABILITY RIGHTS MARYLAND

#### HOUSE BILL 912 – Institutions of Higher Education - Instructor Training - Accommodations for Students With Disabilities

March 5, 2025

#### Position: Support

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the protection and advocacy organization for the state of Maryland; the mission of the organization, part of a national network of similar agencies, is to advocate for the legal rights of people with disabilities throughout the state. DRM envisions a world where people with disabilities are fully included in the workplace, neighborhoods and all aspects of community life. We help people with disabilities pursue opportunities to participate fully in all aspects of community life, and champion their rights to self-determination, dignity, equality, opportunity, and freedom from discrimination and harm. For this reason, **DRM supports House Bill 912**, which

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, individuals with any disability are much less likely to be employed than their counterparts without disabilities.<sup>1</sup> The unemployment rate in 2024, defined as “those who did not have a job, were available for work, and were actively looking for a job in the 4 weeks preceding the survey” was nearly twice as high for individuals with disabilities as those without, 7.5% compared to 3.8% respectively. One cause of this disparity is barriers to post-secondary education.

Proper support, resources, and accommodations from faculty are critical to student success. However, a US Government Accountability Office (GAO) study in 2024 found that college staff “report difficulties staying current on information that could help them support students with disabilities” in part because the US Department of Education does not provide notifications to college staff on newly issued guidance and other information about accommodations for students with disabilities.<sup>2</sup> While the GAO recommended that the US Department of Education take corrective steps to ensure that information related to accommodations for students with disabilities in higher education is routinely disseminated to staff at college’s disability service offices (DSOs), it is equally important for this information to make it into the hands of professors who will be receiving accommodation requests and needing to make reasonable accommodations. The GAO study found that lack of faculty training leads to faculty resistance in implementing

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<sup>1</sup> [Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics - 2024](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Higher Education: Education Could Improve Information on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)  
| U.S. GAO

approved accommodations.<sup>3</sup> Faculty lack training in how to teach in a universal design environment and how to balance the provision of accommodations with maintaining the integrity of their courses. By requiring yearly training on the legal obligations institutions have toward students with disabilities, HB 912 will help remove faculty training as a barrier to student success.

For these reasons, DRM **supports HB 912.**

For more information or with questions, please contact Megan Jones at [meganc@disabilityrightsmd.org](mailto:meganc@disabilityrightsmd.org).

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<sup>3</sup> [GAO-24-105614, HIGHER EDUCATION: Education Could Improve Information on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)