



## TESTIMONY FOR HB0502

### Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative - Established

**Bill Sponsor:** Speaker

**Committee:** Appropriations

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB0502 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

One of the things that makes Maryland such a great state to live in is how we treat other people, especially people who are different from us and who have different challenges. We support a population that contains such diversity of culture, religion, experience and capability.

This bill, if enacted, would put the state in a position to lead by example in hiring and supporting people with disabilities. It establishes the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy within the Department of Disabilities. That Office would be responsible for promoting the recruitment, hiring, retention and career advancement of people with disabilities across the state. It would also set policy within the government that would establish best practices and reduce barriers for job seekers.

This is what Maryland is – a place where everyone can be successful.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.