



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 4, 2025

House Bill 502
Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a
Model Employer Initiative - Established
House Appropriations Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 502 would establish the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy within the Department of Disabilities; establishing the Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative within the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy to facilitate efforts that improve outcomes in the hiring, recruitment, retention, and advancement of people with disabilities in the State government workforce; and requiring the Office to report annually on the progress and outcomes of the Initiative.

This office establishment is essential to ensuring equitable access to employment for individuals with disabilities. It would support their career advancement and development by establishing a dedicated department focused on recruitment, hiring, and retention. Additionally, this department could provide training for agencies that assist job seekers, helping connect individuals with disabilities to suitable positions. The establishment of this department would further acknowledge the equal dignity of human persons regardless of disabilities. It is our responsibility to ensure active participation in civil community through employment for individuals that are unique and unrepeatable.¹

The proposed legislation would address the workplace barriers that employees with disabilities often face. By establishing this office, it would create a resource to ensure proper accommodation is provided and necessary assistive technology is available. Furthermore, the office would promote workforce diversity and prepare employers to successfully hire and retain

¹ <https://capp-usa.org/fratelli-tutti/>

individuals with disabilities.² People with disabilities are a vital part of our society, and we must create pathways within our communities to help them achieve their career aspirations.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 502**.

Thank you for your consideration.

² <https://leagueforpeople.org/program/employment-services/>