



## People on the Go of Maryland

SB 433, cross-filed with HB 502

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

*Establishing the Office of Disability Employment 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.*

Position: Support

February 18<sup>th</sup> 2025, 1:00 pm

Sponsored by the President by request of the Administration,  
and by Senators [Augustine](#), [Charles](#), [Ellis](#), [Henson](#), [Hettleman](#), [Kagan](#), [King](#), and  
[Lam](#)

Assigned to: Finance Committee

Written by Cody Drinkwater

Policy Coordinator - People On the Go of Maryland

Honorable Chairperson, and distinguished members of the Appropriations  
Committee:

People On the Go of Maryland (POG) is a statewide self-advocacy organization, run for and by those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD), and our mission is to promote self advocacy throughout the state.

POG respectfully offers this written testimony in support of SB 433, for the following reasons:

1. The Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative would promote the recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities across State government.
2. People with disabilities need and want to work, earn real wages with benefits, and thrive in Maryland's economy. POG notes that:
  - According to public data, while 79% of Marylanders without disabilities are employed, **only 45% of Marylanders with disabilities** (ages 18-64) **are currently employed.**
  - People with disabilities, whether physical, intellectual, or developmental, are historically unemployed or under-employed. **27.6% of people currently supported by DDA providers, work in individual competitive jobs, and only 35% of those work more than 20 hours per week.**
  - According to the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, Maryland is facing a **severe worker shortage, with only 40 workers available for every 100 jobs.** Tapping into the talent pool of individuals with disabilities would help to fill these gaps.
3. As this Initiative is modeled on the nationally-recognized State as a Model Employer (SAME) guidelines, Maryland State government will serve as a model for private-sector business, by committing to improve hiring, recruitment, retention, and advancement of people with disabilities in the State workforce.

Therefore, People on the Go respectfully asks for a favorable report on SB 433. We would request that any funds appropriated for this Initiative not be taken

away from those already specified for existing services and supports for Marylanders with disabilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions. Please contact Cody Drinkwater or Mat Rice.

Thank you,

Cody Drinkwater, Policy Coordinator

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