

MDOD_SB0433_FAV_02.04.25.pdf

Uploaded by: Anne Blackfield

Position: FAV



DATE: February 4, 2025

BILL: SB 433 – Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative - Established

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: Favorable

Dear Chair Beidle,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter in support of SB 433. This legislation creates the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy within MDOD to support our work promoting employment, training, and career-readiness policies for youths and adults with disabilities.

The legislation also establishes the Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative under the newly created Office. This initiative is modelled on the State as a Model Employer Initiative, a national movement that ensures that state governments serve as model employers for private-sector businesses by committing to improve hiring, recruitment, retention, and advancement of people with disabilities in state government workforces.

Through this initiative, the Office will help recruit talented job seekers with disabilities for available State positions, work with State agencies to develop plans to hire and retain workers with disabilities, help State agencies identify and pay for reasonable accommodations for new State hires, and analyze the State's progress towards meeting its goals for including people with disabilities in the workforce. While all job seekers with disabilities will be welcome to participate in this initiative, the Office will have the flexibility to support individuals who are not eligible for other programs such as the vocational rehabilitation services offered through Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).

Individuals with disabilities have been historically under-utilized in the workforce despite their great skill and unique perspective. Cultivating talent among Maryland's disabled population and matching these individuals with meaningful work is not just the right thing to do, but is also critical to filling vacant jobs and keeping Maryland at the forefront of innovation. To be competitive in the global economy, employers must use the important contributions of all workers, including those with disabilities.

We respectfully request a favorable report on SB 433. Thank you for your support of the many Marylanders with disabilities ready to help build the State's workforce and grow the economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Beatty".

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary



SB0433_Maryland_as_a_Model_Employer_Initiative_MLC

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0433

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

Bill Sponsor: President

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0433 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.

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_SB433.pdf

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 4, 2025

Senate Bill 433

**Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a
Model Employer Initiative - Established
Senate Finance 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.

Senate Bill 433 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 **SB 433**.

Thank you for your consideration.

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

EH-SB433-FAV-02.04.25.pdf

Uploaded by: English Harper

Position: FAV

DATE: February 4, 2025
BILL: SB 433 – Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and
Maryland as a Model Employer - Established
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Favorable

Dear Chair Beidle,

My name is English Harper, and I am writing in support of Senate Bill 433.

Currently, I work as an Information & Assistance Specialist for the Anne Arundel County Department of Aging & Disabilities' Maryland Access Point office. However, I am writing this letter in my capacity as a private citizen, not on behalf of my employer. SB 433 would offer me additional employment opportunities, which I would greatly appreciate, given the challenges and setbacks I faced when starting my career again following my spinal cord injury.

Exiting high school, I had the option to go to college or to become an Electrician's Apprentice, which would provide me not only with valuable, paid experience and a path to a Journeyman Electrician's license, but with 60 college credits upon completion as well, should I opt to seek a degree later. I opted for the apprenticeship pathway, as I believed this path offered me the most options and would allow me to have a steady foothold in life that a degree alone (and potentially the debt that may come with it) would not.

I was enjoying success at the top of my class, until I was unfortunately involved in a life-altering car accident in 2013 that had me facing a lengthy rehabilitation period that spanned years. The injury left me physically unable to perform the work required of an Electrician, and without the college credits I would have received upon completing the apprenticeship, which meant that I was now essentially starting over from scratch, with a disability on top of that. As a result of various programs and supports, peer mentorship, and connecting and networking with others in the disability community, I was able to find work, first with a Center for Independent Living, and now with county government.

Maryland state government's efforts to remove requirements such as college degrees for jobs and instead focus on experience and skill for many positions make them a desirable employer for individuals such as myself. The Maryland as a Model Employer initiative created by this bill will continue to work to identify and remove barriers that inadvertently keep people like myself from obtaining State jobs. This program would offer me access and opportunities to advance my career in support of the state that supported me after my accident to become independent and financially self-sufficient.

I respectfully request your favorable report for Senate Bill 433.

Sincerely,

English Harper
Timonium, MD

SB433.Council.Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Finance Committee

February 4, 2025

SB 433: Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative – Established

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need. **By increasing employment opportunities and promoting economic mobility for more Marylanders**, SB 433 is another step to make sure that happens.

What does this legislation do?

- Establishes the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy within the Department of Disabilities
- Creates the Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative to promote the recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities across State government.

WHY is it important?

- **People with developmental disabilities need and want to work, earn real wages with benefits, and thrive in Maryland's economy.** The Initiative includes activities that support people with disabilities to get and keep jobs in State government. This includes outreach, recruitment, supportive resources, identification of barriers and help to remove them, strategic planning, and data tracking.
- **More work is needed to close the employment gap for people with disabilities.**
 - Only **45% of Marylanders with disabilities** (ages 18-64) are employed
 - **79% of those without disabilities** are employed
- **People with developmental disabilities are historically underemployed and unemployed.** According to public data:
 - **27.6% of people supported by DDA providers worked in individual competitive jobs, and only 35% of those people worked more than 20 hours per week.**

- **This bill helps many Marylanders while also addressing workforce shortages.** Maryland faces a **severe worker shortage**, with only **40 workers available for every 100 jobs** (Maryland Chamber of Commerce). Tapping into the underutilized talent pool of individuals with disabilities can help fill these gaps.

- 24% of Marylanders have a disability.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director: RLondon@md-council.org

SB433.DDCoalition.FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

Senate Finance Committee

February 4, 2025

SB 433: Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative – Established

Position: **Support**



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Columbia, MD 21046

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. As such, the DD Coalition supports SB 433.



1500 Union Avenue
Suite 2000
Baltimore, MD 21211

What does this legislation do?

- Establishes the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy within the Department of Disabilities
- Creates the Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative to promote the recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities across State government.



8835 Columbia 100 Pky
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Columbia, MD 21044

WHY is this legislation important?

- **More needs to be done to address employment gaps.** People with developmental disabilities need and want to work, earn real wages with benefits, and thrive in Maryland's economy.
 - Only **45% of Marylanders with disabilities** (ages 18-64) are employed
 - **79% of those without disabilities** are employed
- **More needs to be done to improve economic outcomes.** People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are historically underemployed and unemployed. According to public data:
 - **27.6% of people supported by DDA providers worked in individual competitive jobs, and only 35% of those people worked more than 20 hours per week.**
- **This bill helps Marylanders with disabilities while helping with workforce shortages.** Maryland faces a **severe worker shortage**, with only **40 workers available for every 100 jobs** (Maryland Chamber of Commerce). Tapping into the underutilized talent pool of individuals with disabilities can help fill these gaps.
- **Creates a more inclusive workforce.** Modeled on the nationally recognized State as a Model Employer (SAME) Initiative, Maryland State government will serve as a model employer for private-sector business by committing to improve hiring, recruitment, retention, and advancement of people with disabilities in the State workforce.



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**
CREATING CHANGE · IMPROVING LIVES

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Contact: Rachel London, Chair, DD Coalition: RLondon@md-council.org