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HB0430

Commented [WR2R1]: added

February 12, 2025

TO: Members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 430 – Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program - Upper Age Limit - Prohibition

POSITION: Support with Amendments

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports with amendments** House Bill (HB) 430 - Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program - Upper Age Limit - Prohibition.

This bill would allow working persons with disabilities to maintain their eligibility for program services after they reach age 65 regardless of their earned income from employment. Currently, individuals turning 65 must choose between continuing to earn income from work or maintaining the insurance coverage that pays for the community-based services they need to avoid institutionalization. Historically, people with disabilities have been limited in their ability to earn money and contribute to society by regulatory frameworks that gatekeep access to necessary medical care. Additionally, as a result of healthcare improvements that result in life expectancy increases, people are working later in their lives. According to the Pew Research Center, 19% of adults ages 65 and older are employed today. In 1987, only 11% of older adults were working.¹ As a result, limitations on the age in which individuals may work and receive program services are not commensurate to the career lengths of individuals without disabilities or the federal full retirement age. This bill is a step toward empowering people with disabilities in Maryland to maintain their self-determination and age in their chosen least restrictive environment.

Commented [KR3]: Perhaps - "Historically, people with disabilities have been limited in their ability to earn money and contribute to society by regulatory frameworks"

As with all bills that expand eligibility for State programs, this will have an associated fiscal note. The actual cost, however, is offset by the continued ability of people with disabilities to earn and spend their income in our communities, and by the savings the State realizes every time it contributes to the cost of community-based services instead of the more expensive nursing facility cost of care. However, the BCA believes the bill should be amended to include a provision that ensures individuals who were previously found ineligible only because of the age ceiling have the opportunity to reapply.

For the above stated reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 430, **provided for the inclusion of the aforementioned amendments**.

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ⁱ Braga, R. F. and D. (2023, December 14). *I. the growth of the older workforce*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2023/12/14/the-growth-of-the-older-workforce/#:~:text=Some%2019%25%20of%20adults%20ages%2065%20and%20older,early%201960s%2C%20when%2018%25%20of%20older%20Americans%20worked.>