

The Honorable Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for House Bill 430 – Employed Individuals With Disabilities Program - Upper Age Limit - Prohibition

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

As the Chief Executive Officer of Maryland Works, Inc., a statewide association of non-profit community service providers and individual workforce development professionals who provide job training, employment, and business ownership opportunities for people with disabilities, I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 430, which seeks to expand and protect access to the Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program. This vital legislation prohibits from establishing an age limit for eligibility to receive Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program services and ensures that individuals with disabilities can maintain their independence and receive necessary services without facing unnecessary barriers to eligibility.

HB 430 explicitly prohibits the Department from limiting eligibility for EID Program services based on:

1. The earned or unearned income of the applicant or the applicant's spouse;
2. Any assets or resources of the applicant's or recipient's spouse that are not joint assets;
3. Any retirement account assets or resources of the applicant or recipient; or
4. Any assets or resources in an independence account established for a recipient of EID Program services.

Additionally, the bill ensures that eligibility is not contingent on applicants applying for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits if they have earnings above the substantial gainful activity level established by the Social Security Administration and protects the rights of individuals with disabilities to maintain access to critical health care resources regardless of their age.

HB 430 acknowledges the importance of supporting individuals with disabilities who strive for independence and economic self-sufficiency. This legislation represents a crucial step forward in promoting equity, reducing barriers to care, and ensuring that no individual is denied access to the health care services they need simply because of their income, age, or financial resources.

I urge you to support HB 430 and to ensure its passage in the upcoming legislative session. This bill is not only a matter of fairness but also a demonstration of our commitment to fostering and empowering all members of our community to thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Manzoni". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Manzoni

Chief Executive Officer

Maryland Works, Inc.

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