



DATE: March 11, 2026      COMMITTEE: Senate Finance  
BILL NO: Senate Bill 539  
BILL TITLE: Dept of Social and Economic Mobility - Workforce Opportunities Grant Program and Fund  
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger supports Senate Bill 539 - Department of Social and Economic Mobility - Workforce Opportunities Grant Program and Fund,

**Bill Summary:**

Establishes the Workforce Opportunities Grant Program to provide grants to support the planning and execution of workforce events and job fairs in the State.

**Background:**

Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger’s services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based and community-based programs.

Kennedy Krieger's Neurodiversity at Work is a catalyst for collaboration, innovative ideas, and actionable strategies that drive workplace success. Together, we’re shaping more inclusive, forward-thinking workplaces - where untapped potential becomes a powerful driver of success. Currently, the program includes several specialty initiatives: CORE Foundations (a Developmental Disabilities Administration Licensed Agency), HR pathways hiring program, training and education services, legislative efforts, research, transition consultation services, and planning for an annual national conference along with ongoing events.

Kennedy Krieger Institute believes that individuals with disabilities have the skills, talents, and drive to contribute significantly to the workforce and to the broader community. A neurodiverse workforce benefits all.

**Rationale:**

Establishing a Workforce Opportunities Grant Program to financially support workforce events and job fairs can have meaningful impact for individuals with disabilities seeking employment. This initiative supports organizations that can successfully connect employers with potential employees, ultimately improving statewide workforce participation and long-term economic resilience.

For individuals with disabilities, job fairs provide an opportunity to network and explore potential jobs that may interest them. Additionally, they can receive information about workforce accommodations, access inclusive employers, and participate in on-the-spot interviews that can increase confidence and independence.

**Kennedy Krieger requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 539.**