

HOUSE BILL 502

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5lr0434
CF SB 433

By: **The Speaker (By Request – Administration) and Delegates Allen, Bhandari, Buckel, Cardin, Fennell, Foley, Hornberger, Jackson, Kerr, Phillips, Ruff, Simpson, Stein, Taveras, Toles, Turner, Vogel, Wilkins, Woods, Woorman, and Wu**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2025

Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a**
3 **Model Employer Initiative – Established**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and
5 Policy within the Department of Disabilities; establishing the Maryland as a Model
6 Employer Initiative within the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and
7 Policy to facilitate efforts that improve outcomes in the hiring, recruitment,
8 retention, and advancement of people with disabilities in the State government
9 workforce; and generally relating to the establishment of the Office of Disability
10 Employment Advancement and Policy and the Maryland as a Model Employer
11 Initiative.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
13 Article – Human Services
14 Section 7–114(b)
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

17 BY adding to
18 Article – Human Services
19 Section 7–1201 through 7–1205 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 12. Office of
20 Disability Employment Advancement and Policy”
21 Annotated Code of Maryland
22 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

23 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
24 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **Article – Human Services**

2 7–114.

3 (b) The Department shall oversee and administer the following programs and
4 units:

5 (1) constituent services and ombudsmen programs;

6 (2) the Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program under Subtitle 6
7 of this title;8 (3) the Office of Personal Assistance Services, including the Attendant
9 Care Program under Subtitle 4 of this title;10 (4) Telecommunications Access of Maryland under Subtitle 8 of this title;
11 [and]12 (5) Telecommunications Devices and Distribution of Accessible
13 Information for Disabled Individuals under Subtitle 9 of this title; AND14 (6) **THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT AND**
15 **POLICY.**16 **SUBTITLE 12. OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT AND POLICY.**17 **7–1201.**18 (A) **IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
19 **INDICATED.**20 (B) **“DEPARTMENT” MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES.**21 (C) **“INITIATIVE” MEANS THE MARYLAND AS A MODEL EMPLOYER**
22 **INITIATIVE.**23 (D) **“OFFICE” MEANS THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT**
24 **ADVANCEMENT AND POLICY.**25 (E) **“SECRETARY” MEANS THE SECRETARY OF DISABILITIES.**26 **7–1202.**27 (A) **THERE IS AN OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT**
28 **AND POLICY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT.**

1 **(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE OFFICE INCLUDES:**

2 **(1) THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES IN**
3 **THE STATE DISABILITIES PLAN, ESTABLISHED UNDER § 7-132 OF THIS TITLE,**
4 **RELATING TO THE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND CAREER-READINESS OF**
5 **INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES;**

6 **(2) PERFORMING DUTIES UNDER § 7-114 OF THIS TITLE NECESSARY**
7 **TO SUPPORT STATEWIDE POLICIES AND STANDARDS RELATING TO THE**
8 **EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND CAREER-READINESS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH**
9 **DISABILITIES;**

10 **(3) COLLECTING INFORMATION AND DATA FROM UNITS OF STATE**
11 **GOVERNMENT RELATING TO THE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND**
12 **CAREER-READINESS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH §**
13 **7-115 OF THIS TITLE; AND**

14 **(4) IMPLEMENTING THE MARYLAND AS A MODEL EMPLOYER**
15 **INITIATIVE, ESTABLISHED UNDER § 7-1205 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

16 **7-1203.**

17 **THE SECRETARY MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS AS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT**
18 **THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

19 **7-1204.**

20 **THIS SUBTITLE MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO ESTABLISH AN ENTITLEMENT**
21 **PROGRAM.**

22 **7-1205.**

23 **(A) BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026, THE OFFICE SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR**
24 **IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT OF THE MARYLAND AS A MODEL EMPLOYER**
25 **INITIATIVE.**

26 **(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE INITIATIVE SHALL INCLUDE:**

27 **(1) PROMOTING THE RECRUITMENT, HIRING, RETENTION, AND**
28 **CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ACROSS STATE**
29 **GOVERNMENT;**

1 **(2) CONDUCTING AND COORDINATING OUTREACH TO JOB SEEKERS**
2 **WITH DISABILITIES AND STATE GOVERNMENT TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN**
3 **THE INITIATIVE;**

4 **(3) DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING TRAININGS TO STATE AGENCIES**
5 **AND UNITS ADDRESSING BEST PRACTICES, RESOURCES, AND RELEVANT FEDERAL**
6 **AND STATE LAWS PERTAINING TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH**
7 **DISABILITIES;**

8 **(4) ASSISTING STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND UNITS TO**
9 **ATTRACT QUALIFIED JOB SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES TO AVAILABLE POSITIONS;**

10 **(5) PROMOTING ACCESS TO AND ACQUISITION OF ASSISTIVE**
11 **TECHNOLOGY FOR NEW STATE EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES;**

12 **(6) EVALUATING STATE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AND POLICIES AND**
13 **MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING WAYS TO REDUCE BARRIERS FOR JOB**
14 **SEEKERS AND EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES;**

15 **(7) COLLECTING FROM EACH UNIT OF STATE GOVERNMENT, AS PART**
16 **OF THE PLANS REQUIRED UNDER § 7-116 OF THIS TITLE, PERFORMANCE GOALS**
17 **RELATED TO HIRING AND RETENTION EFFORTS FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES**
18 **AND ANY DATA DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE SECRETARY TO DEMONSTRATE**
19 **PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES; AND**

20 **(8) REPORTING ON THE INITIATIVE'S OUTCOMES IN COMPLIANCE**
21 **WITH SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION.**

22 **(C) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2026, AND EACH DECEMBER 1**
23 **THEREAFTER, THE OFFICE SHALL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL**
24 **ASSEMBLY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE,**
25 **ON:**

26 **(1) PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES OF THE INITIATIVE; AND**

27 **(2) RECOMMENDATIONS DEVELOPED BY THE INITIATIVE FOR**
28 **CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT OF STATE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES FOR**
29 **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.**

30 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
31 1, 2025.