



DATE: January 25, 2022 **COMMITTEE:** Economic Matters
BILL NO: House Bill 78
BILL TITLE: Discrimination in Employment – Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants With Disabilities
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Houser Bill 78– Discrimination in Employment – Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants With Disabilities

Bill Summary:

HB78 prohibits an employer from failing or refusing to make a reasonable accommodation for the known disability of an otherwise qualified applicant for employment. The employer is not required to reasonably accommodate the disability of a qualified applicant if the accommodation would cause undue hardship on the conduct of an employer’s business.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger's Neurodiversity at Work program takes a multi-faceted approach to hiring and retaining individuals of all abilities as part of the workforce. Neurodiversity at Work is a collective impact initiative designed to create and support gainful employment for individuals with disabilities, providing economic benefit for businesses and the larger community. The Neurodiversity at Work program fosters integrated workplace settings where all individuals can experience success and independence. Currently the program includes several specialty initiatives Project SEARCH, 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 a national conference and on-going events.

Education and Training: Kennedy Krieger provides workforce training and development through customized, in-person Workforce Awareness and Inclusion training for Institute employees and local businesses. We provide to support to each individual and business for successful, sustainable, and integrated employment for all abilities.

Rationale:

People with disabilities want the opportunity to join the workforce. As a provider of employment services, we choose hiring practices that support growth and retention based on their qualifications. Accommodations that support success at work include, but not limited too; checklists, peer mentorship, dimmed lighting, extended training job, job coaching from external agency, and visual prompts. Accommodations are specific to each individual to support success in the workplace. This legislation will support statewide efforts for more disability awareness and more inclusive hiring practices.

Kennedy Krieger Institute is an inclusive employer that 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.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 78