

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
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SENATE BILL DRS25072-MKz-187A*

Short Title: State as a Model Employer/IDD. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Lee, Barringer, and Edwards (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OFFICE OF STATE HUMAN RESOURCES, TO STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE THE EMPLOYMENT BY STATE AGENCIES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING TARGETING EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The Department of Health and Human Services (Department), in consultation with the Office of State Human Resources, shall study the development and implementation of a comprehensive, statewide program that establishes the State as a model employer in the employment of individuals with disabilities. The goals of the program shall include (i) increasing disability inclusion and access to State agency employment, (ii) specifically targeting an increase in the employment by State agencies of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and (iii) demonstrating to local government and private sector employers the viability and effectiveness of employing individuals with disabilities. As part of its study, the Department shall solicit the input of key stakeholders, including other relevant State agencies and organizations.

SECTION 2. In studying the development of a statewide program that establishes the State as a model employer for individuals with disabilities, the Department, in consultation with the Office of State Human Resources, shall examine existing programs in other states and shall consider the feasibility of implementing a comprehensive program in North Carolina that contains at least one or more of the following components, including expanding on existing programs:

- (1) Targeting hiring efforts through the Office of State Human Resources, including fast-track hiring policies that augment or streamline existing agency practices, trial work periods before offering permanent employment, preemployment certification through the Department for State employment, State agency internships, specific eligibility lists for hiring managers, and mandatory interview opportunities.
- (2) Focusing on recruitment and outreach efforts to identify and attract skilled individuals with disabilities for State employment.
- (3) Enhancing accessibility to State employment applications and the steps in the hiring process.



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- 1 (4) Developing explicit reasonable workplace accommodation guidelines that
- 2 include managing costs and providing a request process that encourages
- 3 individuals with disabilities to apply for State employment.
- 4 (5) Building upon existing State personnel training programs to further encourage
- 5 inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.
- 6 (6) Enabling data collection for evaluation and oversight of the State's
- 7 employment practices for hiring individuals with disabilities.
- 8 (7) Increasing public and private partnerships to further develop work-based
- 9 opportunities leading to State employment, such as Project SEARCH.

10 **SECTION 3.** By December 1, 2018, the Department, in consultation with the Office
11 of State Human Resources, shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
12 on Health and Human Services on the results of the study required by this act, including any
13 legislative recommendations.

14 **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law.