



STATE OF TENNESSEE
PROCLAMATION
BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, Tennesseans with disabilities, including mental illness and substance abuse disorders, experience disproportionately high levels of unemployment and underemployment; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities in Tennessee share with the state's other six million residents the desire to achieve personal success and economic self-sufficiency through meaningful work in their communities and deserve the same opportunity for employment as all Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, every person, regardless of ability, has valuable strengths, infinite capacity to learn and the potential to make important contributions to their local communities; and

WHEREAS, in June 2013, Tennessee became an Employment First State, adopting the philosophy and practice that competitive work is the first and preferred post-education activity for individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in May 2021, Tennessee passed the State As a Model Employer (SAME) Bill, ensuring that state agencies and departments design and proactively implement best, promising, and emerging policies, practices, and procedures related to the recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's employment rate of individuals with disabilities is 35.0%, and the employment gap between persons with a disability and persons with no disability has decreased by 5.2% between 2017 and 2020; and

WHEREAS, "Disability Employment Awareness Month" is an appropriate time to recognize the value of employees with disabilities to the state's current and future workforce, as well as Tennessee's public policy accomplishments concerning expanding employment opportunities for citizens with disabilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim the month of October 2022, as

Disability Employment Awareness Month

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this twenty-second day of September, 2022.

Bill Lee

Governor

Lee Hargett

Secretary of State