



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, over 10% of the state workforce has voluntarily disclosed their disability status; and

WHEREAS, October 2024, marks the 79th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month with a purpose of educating people about disability employment issues and celebrating the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim October 2024 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 twentieth day of September 2024.

Bill Lee

Governor

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Secretary of State