# Ken Capone – Director of People On the Go of Maryland

## SA Discussion Series Comments on Employment First and Sub-minimum Wage Advocacy

Hello, my name is Ken I am the director of [People On the Go of Maryland](https://www.peopleonthegomaryland.com/contact-us.php).

Our state is an [Employment First](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/employment-first) State, which is a national movement. Employment First, is a framework for systems change that is centered on the premise that all citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life.

Under this approach, publicly financed systems are urged to align policies, service delivery practices, and reimbursement structures to commit to integrated employment as the priority for publicly funded services for youth and adults with significant disabilities.

Under the Employment First approach, community-based, integrated employment is to be the first option for services for youth and adults with significant disabilities.

In Maryland we submitted legislation in 2016 to phase out sub-minimum wages and sheltered workshops. [Click here for more information](https://apse.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/HB-420-MD-APSE-Testimony-Feb-10-2016.pdf).

The legislation passed in 2016 and in 2020 the last workshop closed in Maryland. Now students who are graduating in Maryland will have a better chance of getting a real job rather than working in a segregated environment without community engagement.