

Dear Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of District 41, the Roland Park neighborhood, in Baltimore City. **I am testifying in support of House Bill 8 (Time to Care Act of 2022).**



The Time to Care Act establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program that enables employees to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave from work to care for the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child; to care for themselves or family members with serious health or medical conditions; or to address immediate needs resulting from the deployment of a family member in the military. The insurance program would be funded equally by employees and employers, with a 0.75% mandatory contribution each pay period (a 0.375% contribution each from employee and employer). Employees would have the right to opt in and opt out of the program.

At some point in our lives, almost all of us confront the reality of being a primary caretaker – whether that means caring for our own newborn children, for our aging parents with unexpected and changing needs, for our loved ones with temporary or long-term medical needs or disabilities, or for the special needs that arise when a family member in the military is deployed. Yet many Marylanders cannot take the time away from work to provide this necessary care because they lack paid family leave. In fact, only 23% of civilian workers have access to paid family leave, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Unpaid leave forces too many Americans to choose between a steady income (and the financial and emotional stability that provides) and a family member’s basic health and well-being. This lack of basic financial stability for those who must care for their families affects us all, but it has a disproportionately destabilizing effect on those with the fewest financial resources, and for those within communities of color.

Guaranteed paid family leave is not a unique or exceptional policy. According to the UCLA World Policy Analysis Center, countries all over the world provide some form of maternity and family medical leave – including most Western European countries, Canada, Russia, and Iran. In the absence of a U.S. federal requirement for family medical leave, state-level provisions already exist for some or all private workers in California, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia.

Legislation establishing a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program would make paid leave available to Maryland workers for up to 12 weeks following the birth or adoption of a child, and when needed to provide care for a family member or oneself. This is an exceedingly popular program supported by 88% of Maryland residents – regardless of party affiliation – according to a poll done by Time to Care Maryland.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of House Bill 8 (Time to Care Act of 2022).

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Johnson
1 Merryman Court
Baltimore, MD 21210
Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore