



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

HB8

Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022)

House Economic Matters

2/15/2022

Testimony presented by Rev. Kathy Shahinian

Good afternoon, Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the committee. My name is Rev. Kathy Shahinian, and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, and we strongly support HB 8.

Too many citizens in our state of Maryland experience impossible choices with the birth or adoption of their children or when faced with personal or family health care needs. Most of the people in our country do not have paid family leave through their employment. Sadly, in Maryland, even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is inaccessible for 56 percent of working people.

Maryland can do better. People should not have to choose between their job and their family. Our families give so much meaning to our lives. Many of us have childhood memories of a parent or relative taking days off work to care for us when we were sick. Many of us have personally experienced the challenge of trying to balance showing up for work and the need to care for elderly or infirm parents.

The Task Force to Develop Church wide Family Leave ¹said, “the family unit is understood, in both our Hebrew and Christian scriptures, as the central and sacred entity in which we teach and learn and grow deeper in our faith, with which we worship God and follow Jesus. Deuteronomy 11:18-19 reminds us: “You, shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.”

It is essential for our society to help working people deal with the challenges of life by creating a strong paid family leave policy that covers all workers regardless of where they fall on the economic strata. We encourage a favorable report for HB8.