

TESTIMONY ON SB 275 - FAVORABLE
**Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program –
Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022)**

TO: Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: The Jewish Community Relations Council, Jewish Federation of Howard County, Elizabeth Singer, Co-Chair

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of Howard County. The JCRC unanimously endorsed support of this critically important legislation. The pandemic has never made it more vital for every worker to be able to stay home when they, or a loved one, are sick. As Jews, we know that preserving life and health is paramount above all else. This bill will allow working people to stay healthy. Paid family and medical leave benefits everyone and is an issue that 88% of Marylanders support.

No one should have to choose between their job or taking care of their own or a loved one's health. Far too many Marylanders must make this impossible choice when they are facing an illness, welcoming a new child, or needing to care for an aging parent.

The program should offer 12 weeks of paid leave to all working Marylanders with an inclusive definition of family, and a 50/50 split in contribution from employers and employees. Low-income workers must be provided a larger percentage of their income to make it affordable for them to take the time. All workers must also be protected against adverse consequences, particularly job loss, for taking leave.

Women and people of color are disproportionately impacted when they do not have access to leave, and in too many cases these groups are forced to leave the labor force to care for their families or health, increasing turnover among workers. At a time when every business is competing to attract and retain labor, small businesses are often the ones left behind by large, out-of-state companies who can better afford to offer paid leave. This program will level the playing field among businesses and workers.

Bills such as this have been effective in many other states and provide an enormously important benefit at a minimal cost to the state, and at a very small cost that is shared by employers and workers. By creating a cost-effective insurance program across all businesses in Maryland, everyone can benefit. I respectfully urge this committee to vote in favor of SB 275.

Elizabeth Singer
6180 Devon Dr.
Columbia, MD 21044

