



# **HOMELESS PERSONS REPRESENTATION PROJECT, INC.**

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## **SUPPORT**

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

**Senate Finance Committee, February 10, 2022**

Testimony of Michelle Madaio, Director – Economic Justice, HPRP

The Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP) is a non-profit civil legal services organization that provides free legal representation to people who are experiencing homeless or at risk of homelessness on legal issues that will lead to an end to homelessness. HPRP regularly represents individuals and families who are experiencing food and housing insecurity in accessing public benefit programs through administrative appeals and advocacy.

**SB 275 would increase economic stability and housing security for individuals and families living in poverty.** HPRP has worked with countless families who lost their job when they needed time off from work to care for a new child or serious medical event. These families were working in low-wage jobs, living paycheck to paycheck without adequate savings to afford unpaid leave. The jobs did not provide these families with paid leave or even the ability to take unpaid leave and hold their jobs until their return. Loss of employment caused the families to experience homelessness because without the income, they could no longer afford their rent. The paid leave program under SB 275 would allow families to attend to their health and medical needs when ill or injured, recover from childbirth, establish infant feeding schedules and bond with a new child, without the threat of losing their wages, job, or housing.

**Maryland’s lack of a paid medical and family leave program disproportionately harms Black and Latinx workers.** Due to factors including systemic racism and wage and employment discrimination, Black and Latinx workers are less likely to be able to afford unpaid leave and have less access to paid leave when compared to white workers.<sup>1</sup> Lack of access to paid family and medical leave exacerbates existing racial disparities in wealth and health outcomes. Without a paid leave program in Maryland like SB 275, racial disparities will continue to exist in which workers have access to paid leave.

**Paid leave programs in other states and countries are associated with positive health and economic outcomes.** Increases in paid parental leave are associated with better infant and child health.<sup>2</sup> Studies on California’s paid family leave policy suggest positive impacts on health outcomes, including self-rated health, psychological distress, decreased likelihood of obesity and asthma.<sup>3</sup>

**HPRP strongly urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 275.** If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Michelle Madaio ([mmadaio@hprplaw.org](mailto:mmadaio@hprplaw.org)).

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1 National Partnership for Women & Families, “Paid Family and Medical Leave: A Racial Justice Issue – and Opportunity,” (August 2018), *available at* <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/paid-family-and-medical-leave-racial-justice-issue-and-opportunity.pdf>

2 Nandi A, Jahagirdar D, Dimitris MC, et al. “The Impact of Parental and Medical Leave Policies on Socioeconomic and Health Outcomes in OECD Countries: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature,” *Milbank Q.* 2018;96(3):434-471, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6131347/>

3 Bullinger LR. “The Effect of Paid Family Leave on Infant and Parental Health in the United States,” *J Health Econ.* 2019 Jul;66:101-116, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31150953/>; *see also* Lee BC, Modrek S, White JS, Batra A, Collin DF, Hamad R, “The Effect of California’s Paid Family Leave Policy on Parent Health: A Quasi-Experimental Study,” *Soc Sci Med.* 2020 Apr;251:112915, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32179364/>