

## Time to Care Act

### Testimony

Dear Chairwoman Kelley,

Please support SB265/HB8 – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program because paid family and medical leave is past due for working women and their families.

My name is Sandy Bell, and I am the current volunteer President of Maryland NOW. The National Organization for Women has been actively advocating for women and their families for years on many fronts such as equal pay for equal work, paid leave, reproductive justice, and preventing domestic violence, along with many other issues.

Many years ago, I was a working single mother of two boys. Fortunately, it was a different time when many employers provided benefits and I was fortunate to have paid sick and vacation leave. An extra blessing was free to me healthcare. This provided me the ability to have a decent apartment and all the other necessities of life, but I still lived paycheck to paycheck and was always one unforeseen expense away from major debt.

When I married again after 10 years of being a single mom, it took me a year to pay off my credit card debt. It would have taken even longer without paid leave. This was before vaccines were available for some of the major childhood diseases and my boys both had mumps and chickenpox. Thank goodness, I was able to stay home and nurse them back to health. I can only imagine the hole it would have put me in if I was not getting paid.

Way too many women today are in a similar situation to mine but without the benefits I enjoyed, and this is a travesty and something we can start to fix with this legislation. To steal someone else's words, "No one should work full time and live in poverty." This bill will not totally wipe out the struggle of many families to make ends meet, but it is a good start.

I urge a favorable report of SB265, the Time to Care Act.

Sandy Bell, President

Maryland NOW