



Testimony in Support
SB275 - Labor and Employment –
Family and Medical Leave
Insurance Program –
Establishment –
(Time to Care Act
of 2022)
Finance
February 10, 2022
By Ken Capone

Hello committee members. My name is Ken Capone. I am the Public Policy Director for People On the Go which is Maryland's statewide self-advocacy organization. We are here to testify in support of SB275 Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program.

Background: People On the Go Maryland builds community through diversity and inclusion. We respect the individuality of our members and are committed to making inclusion a priority so that everyone feels comfortable, valued, and heard. People On the Go remains distinct by maintaining a cross-disability strategy that focuses on effecting positive change in the lives of people with and without disabilities.

Our beliefs in empowerment and inclusion provide the means by which people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities come together to develop self-advocacy and leadership skills, and give voice to the needs of the disability community. Through its grassroots efforts, People On the Go remains distinct by maintaining a cross-disability strategy that focuses on effecting positive change in the lives of people with and without disabilities.

As many you are probably aware, nearly all of us will need to take leave at some point, whether to care for a family member's or our own serious medical condition or disability, or the joyous occasion of welcoming a new child. Without access to paid leave, workers often face a difficult and unnecessary decision, health and family, or work and making ends meet. Not now but in the past, my mother had to take off work to care for me if I got sick or my support needs intensified, or even longer when I had surgery, I know it was a hardship for us. It would have been nice to have something like this back then.

More than 70% of family members caring for a person with Intellectual and or Developmental Disabilities report that caregiving interfered with their work and the odds of an employee losing income increases by 48% if the person lives with a child with disabilities and by 29% if the person lives with and supports an adult with disabilities. That is a significant amount of people experiencing economic hardship. When people having access to dedicated paid family leave, it reduces the odds of losing income by 30%.

As more people with intellectual and or developmental disabilities are supported to work, these additional benefits are important. People with disabilities need leave for the same reasons as all other workers and in the US addressing one's own health condition or disability makes up 55% of all leave taken. People with disabilities are more likely to be employed in low-wage, part-time jobs that provide fewer supports. Access to paid leave increases opportunities for people with disabilities so that we can be supported when needs intensify Just like I did from time to time. The benefits to people with disabilities and their families are clear. Both the person that is sick and the person that is caring for them have time they need to be together and get or give support. They will be less stressed which in turn speeds up the healing process. In conclusion, SB 275 gives people with disabilities the comfort of knowing that they shouldn't feel guilty anymore because they may need extra care from a family member from time to time and it won't be a hardship on the family.

Thank you