

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I am a resident of **District 46 I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 275 (Time to Care Act of 2022).**



The Time to Care Act establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program so employees could take up to 12 weeks of paid leave from work to care for the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child, care for themselves or family members with serious health or medical conditions, or address needs resulting from a military family member's deployment. The program must be funded equally by employees and employers with a 0.75% mandatory contribution each pay period, split evenly between the two (0.375% each) with employees having the right to opt-in/opt-out of the program.

At some point, most of us will need a paid family Leave policy to care for new babies, aging parents, loved ones with health needs or disabilities, or for ourselves. Yet many Marylanders can't take time to care for their family members because they lack paid family leave. In fact, only 23% of civilian workers have access to paid family leave according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Unpaid leave forces too many Americans—especially those whose needs are the greatest—to choose between income and family when illness strikes, when new babies arrive, or when the needs of a family member with a disability intensify. Nearly 25% of women, for example, take ten or fewer days of parental leave, potentially putting themselves and their children at risk physically and emotionally.

Government-guaranteed paid family leave is not a unique or exceptional policy. According to the UCLA World Policy Analysis Centre, countries all over the world provide some forms of maternity or family medical leave, including Canada, the Russia, United Kingdom, and Iran. Providing leave at the state-level family medical leave isn't even new with California, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia having declared paid leave plans a right for some or all private workers.

Legislation establishing a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program would make paid leave available to Maryland workers for up to 12 weeks following the birth or adoption of a child, and when needed to provide care for a family member or oneself. The leave would be funded through an insurance pool, into which workers and their employers contribute. This is an exceedingly popular program with 88% of Maryland residents across political affiliation supporting paid family and medical leave according to a poll done by Time to Care Maryland.

When I was expecting my first child, I was newer to my field and while I was lucky enough to have decent health insurance, my agency allowed paid leave for specific circumstances such as having a child, fostering a child or adopting a child. By the time my second child was born, I had moved to another, much smaller, nonprofit agency. The insurance was less comprehensive and there was no paid leave making it more difficult to meet the increased expenses between my son and the hospital bills with me not having an income. While there were challenges, I realize that my family was able to make it work. That is not the case for many families which is the reason that I support this legislation. When families do not need to be overly concerned with income, they can be focused on what is important and that is building strong relationships with their child.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in support of Senate Bill 275 (Time to Care Act of 2022).

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

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