

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 45. **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.

Two years ago I had a healthy pregnancy and baby, but needed three months of surgery after my daughter was born due to delivery issues. Because my work had paid maternity leave, I was able to take care for my baby, make it to my many appointments, ER visits, and surgical appointments well into the 12<sup>th</sup> week of my leave, without worrying about my pay. Without leave like this, I would have had to risk my health and potentially my life and the well-being of my family. Every Marylander should have the same ability to heal, bond with their children, or care for family members in these situations.

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,  
Rebecca Shillenn  
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Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore