



SEIU Maryland & DC State Council

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SUPPORT

Testimony in FAVOR of SB 828 Family and Medical Leave Act - Modifications

House Economic Matters Committee
March 30, 2023
1:00 PM

Presented by: Terry Cavanagh, Executive Director

We urge a FAVORABLE Report on SB 828

We are proud to say we were early supporters of The Time to Care Act. After several years of trying, we were successful in getting the 2022 Session of the General Assembly to pass it and to override then-Governor Hogan's veto of this incredibly popular approach to dealing with workers' and employers' needs to balance work, personal health, and families.

We commend all those legislators who had the courage to stand up for the legislation. We must take note that all legislators who voted for The Time to Care law were re-elected.

In 1993 President Bill Clinton signed into law, the Family & Medical Leave Act. It was a hallmark of his first term. However, most workers could not afford to take advantage of the law since they could not go without a regular paycheck. Over the last several years, many states recognized this need, and since the federal government will not or cannot address this issue at their level, acted. Now, Maryland joins more than 10 states and our neighbors in the

District of Columbia and Delaware in enacting Paid Family & Medical Leave legislation. It has been a long time coming, but as someone once said, “it’s never too late to do the right thing.” This is the right thing. Now is the right time.

We salute Senator Hayes for his indefatigable efforts to pass the bill last year and his continued diligence to get the job done this session as well as Delegate Qi for sponsoring the House version of the bill.

There are a few important points that were addressed by Senate amendments..

TIMING – The bill was amended to give time for the Department of Labor to set up the program that will be reliable, financially stable and efficient. We support those changes.

OVERALL COST – We understand the attraction of establishing a “cap”. The Senate placed a cap at 1.2 percent of payroll. We would have preferred no cap or a higher cap, but the experience of other states indicates this should be sufficient. We are concerned that a lower cap could hamper a successful launch of this important program and risk “strangling the infant in its crib”.

THE SPLIT – The Senate adopted an amendment establishing the employee / employer split on premium payments at 50 percent each. We support that amendment.

There is a symmetry and balance in a 50/50 split of costs for the program between workers and employers which no other numbers can match. It allows the contributions to be affordable for all and reflects the benefits to workers and employers of the program.

Thank you.

We ask a **FAVORABLE REPORT of SB 828**