

March 7, 2023

Jeffrey Rubin
Potomac, MD 20854



TESTIMONY ON HBI015 - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
Labor and Employment - Maryland Healthy Working Families Act - Seasonal Temporary Workers

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Jeffrey Rubin, on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ)

My name is Jeffrey Rubin and I am a resident of District 15, in Potomac. I'm a physician scientist who worked at the Bethesda campus of the National Institutes of Health for 28 years. On behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ), I am submitting this testimony in opposition to HBI015, Labor and Employment - Maryland Healthy Working Families Act - Seasonal Temporary Workers. JUFJ organizes 6,000 Jewish Marylanders and allies from across the state in support of social, racial, and economic justice campaigns.

Jewish tradition makes clear that nobody should have to choose between their job and caring for their health. The Jewish sage Hillel teaches us that we can't separate ourselves from our community; we all have a responsibility for each other's well-being. The General Assembly must ensure that all Marylanders can take time to sustain and care for themselves and their families.

The Maryland Healthy Working Families Act became law in 2018 after several years of vigorous debate. Many compromises were made during the process, including one specifying that an employer would not be required to allow an employee to use earned sick and safe leave during the first 106 calendar days the employee works for the employer. The original version of the bill more justly limited this time frame to 90 calendar days. It is well-known that the passage of the bill in the Finance Committee was substantially delayed due to the unwillingness of a single legislator representing some of the business interests in his jurisdiction to approve the bill without a longer time frame imposed. Ultimately, a consensus was reached that called for 106 calendar days. Increasing the probationary period to 120 days would undo a long-held compromise that was difficult to reach, and would in turn set a bad precedent and potentially fuel additional efforts to reverse course rather than moving on to address other pressing labor justice issues in need of legislative attention.

In short, we believe that the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act should remain as it is, without altering hard-fought compromises that were necessary for its passage. **Therefore, on behalf of Jews United for Justice, I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on HBI015.**