



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Finance

Testimony on: SB0828 – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 2, 2023

Bill Contact: Senator Antonio Hayes

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as in several neighboring counties. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all Maryland residents healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. SB0828, with sponsor amendments, will implement the fair and effective paid leave program which Maryland working families need, ensuring that no one must choose between the family they love and the job they need.

Passing the Time to Care Act of 2022 in the last legislative session was a historic victory for all Marylanders, and one of the strongest and most comprehensive FAML I programs in the country. However, that was just the first step in realizing a Paid Family and Medical Leave program in Maryland. The critical work to create and implement an accessible, equitable, and robust program is the next major step in fulfilling the promise of the Time to Care Act of 2022, and the General Assembly still has a key role to play in this effort. SB0828 will fix certain definitions and make modifications that are necessary for the Department of Labor to implement this critical program effectively.

SB0828 will modify the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAML I) Program by specifying various aspects of programmatic implementation, administration, and the cost-sharing split. DTMG supports the sponsor amendments, which make the cost-sharing split 50-50 between employers and employees, putting SB0828 in the same posture as the House Bill. This is fundamentally important, since it keeps the program affordable and equitable for both employers and employees in Maryland. A 50/50 cost-sharing split is in line with most other states - including our neighboring state of Delaware - that have recently passed FAML I programs. A 50/50 cost-sharing split will ensure our program centers the needs of both employees and employers, continuing to set the bar as a national model.

The FAML I program will not only benefit individual workers but will have a widespread positive impact across our state. Based on the experience of states that already have paid leave programs in place, we can expect benefits that include an improvement in public health; reduced spending on public benefits; a decrease in child maltreatment; and increased retention of women and workers of color in the workplace.

Paid leave is proven to support businesses, workers, and families. Passing SB0828 with the sponsor amendments will set important parameters for the FMLI program, putting the program firmly on the path toward successful implementation.

Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0828 with the sponsor amendments and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett
DoTheMostGood Maryland Team
oliviabartlett@verizon.net
240-751-5599