

TESTIMONY ON SB 828

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM - MODIFICATIONS

Senate Finance Committee

March 2, 2023

SUPPORT

Submitted by: Melinda Lipscomb

Melinda Lipscomb strongly supports SB 828, which modifies the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program by specifying various aspects of programmatic implementation, administration, and the cost-sharing split. **Melinda Lipscomb strongly supports the sponsor amendments, which make the cost-sharing split 50-50 between employers and employees, putting SB 828 in the same posture as the House Bill.**

Passing the Time to Care Act of 2022 last legislative session was a historic victory for all Marylanders - and it was just the first step in realizing Paid Family and Medical Leave in Maryland. The critical work to create and implement an accessible, equitable, and robust FAMLI 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 collective effort. Passing SB 828 with the sponsor amendments will set important parameters for the FAMLI program, putting the program firmly on the path toward successful implementation.

Melinda Lipscomb would love to give testimony in person as a Complex-Chronic Illness Patient Leader and Advocate personally affected by the need for this program, but being bed-tethered disabled, is unable to do so. Melinda relies on her family to care for her as after years of medical neglect and stigma Melinda only has her family help, not qualifying for current programs. This means when Melinda needs to go to a doctor appointment or needs full-time care a family member must take off work and lose pay for that time. As one can imagine, the financial strain Melinda Lipscomb and her family already experience is exacerbated greatly by losing pay while caring for her. Melinda Lipscomb knows her family is not alone. Passing SB 828 with the sponsor amendments will help all Marylanders.

In particular, SB 828 - with sponsor amendments - sets the contribution rate for the program with a cost-sharing split of 50% employees, 50% employers. This is fundamentally important, as 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 FAMLI programs.¹ Maryland passed one of the strongest and most comprehensive FAMLI programs in the country, and this sponsor amendment to create a 50/50 cost-sharing split is of the utmost importance to ensure our program centers the needs of both employees and employers, continuing to set the bar as a national model.

Melinda Lipscomb appreciates your consideration and strongly urges a favorable report on SB 828 with sponsor amendments.

¹ A Better Balance. 2023. Comparative Chart of Paid Family and Medical Leave Laws in the US. <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/paid-family-leave-laws-chart/>