

March 2, 2023

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TESTIMONY ON SB0828 – FAVORABLE WITH SPONSOR AMENDMENTS
Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications

TO: Chair Griffith, Vice-Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Dr. Jeffrey S. Rubin

My name is Jeffrey S. Rubin and I am a resident of District 15, in Potomac. **I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0828, Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Modifications, with sponsor amendments.**

As a physician, family caregiver, and cancer patient, I have firsthand experience with the stressful, time-consuming nature of medical care. PFML programs can mitigate some of the challenges that people face when confronting serious illness or other life-changing circumstances in their families, such as the birth or adoption of a child, or the relocation of a spouse in the military. Having the time off from work and financial support to effectively manage these challenging periods is not only important for the family, but for a person's employer as well. This increases the likelihood that people taking leave will be in better health, with a better state of mind, and will return to their jobs where they can resume meeting the needs of their employers. The relative lack of turnover in places that have PFML programs is a well-documented, cost-saving benefit for businesses.

I strongly believe that employees and employers should share equally in the financing of the PFML program, that is, a 50/50 split of the required contributions into the insurance fund. This is consistent with contributions to unemployment insurance programs and reflects the complementary benefits that employees and employers would receive from the PFML program. The fact that small employers are exempt from having to make financial contributions to the insurance fund eliminates a concern that was raised during deliberations last year.

I welcome other provisions in SB0828. It makes sense that the Secretary of Labor would review the status of the insurance fund on a yearly basis and adjust the size of contributions accordingly, while preserving the 50/50 split. This would enable appropriate responses to economic fluctuations and ensure the solvency of the fund over time. Extending the implementation timeline would allow the Department of Labor to develop regulations and obtain the necessary technology to run the program. I appreciate the input of PFML advocacy policy experts in proposing additional changes to the bill that passed last year, to optimize the implementation of the program.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB0828 with the sponsor amendments.