

SB828_LindaBergofsky_FAV
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Poolesville, MD

TESTIMONY ON SB828 - POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH SPONSOR AMENDMENTS
Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications

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

FROM: Linda R. Bergofsky

My name is Linda Bergofsky. I am a resident of District 15. I am submitting this testimony in support with amendments for SB828, Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications.

I live in Poolesville, where I work part time as a substitute teacher. I'm also a member of Oseh Shalom in Laurel, MD. Last session, I was one of thousands of Marylanders who advocated for the passage of the Time to Care Act. Our synagogue also signed on as an employer supporter. It was a great win for Maryland's low wage workers. But, as you well know, the devil is in the details when it comes to implementation. Without this strengthening legislation, the program could be implemented inequitably, risking unfair contribution rates and potentially harming employees earning less than \$15 per hour.

Our oldest grandson is a senior at UMBC and works three jobs in addition to attending school. Those three jobs are the equivalent of a full-time job but none offer paid time off. Recently, he had back surgery and was not able to work for a month as he recovered. Paid Family and Medical Leave was designed for my grandson—theoretically. I would hate to see him left behind because of fixable legislative language.

The modifications in this bill will address inequities in the program, including removing the requirement for workers to exhaust all of their employer-provided leave before using the FMLI Program, which will benefit not only employees, but also their employers; codifying a contribution rate that is fair for workers; covering the costs for Medicaid providers and employees earning less than \$15 per hour; strengthening reporting requirements; and preventing any efforts to weaken the program. We are pushing for this clarifying legislation to ensure that the program is implemented in the strongest form possible so that all workers have equitable access to the program.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable with sponsor amendments report on SB828.