



Testimony Concerning HB 52
“State Employees -- Parental Bereavement Leave”
Submitted to the House Appropriations Committee
January 30, 2024

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) strongly supports HB 52, which would entitle State employees to 10 days of parental bereavement leave after the death of a child, who is younger than age 21, or after a stillbirth.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other supports for children and their families. We have been active in state and federal debates on policies that address the needs of working families and are strongly committed to ensuring that they have the supports they need to care for their children while meeting the demands of their jobs.

Comptroller Lierman's *State of the Economy Report* notes Maryland has experienced more women leaving the workforce, compared with women leaving the workforce nationally. In addition, the decline in the State's labor participation rate was most prominent among men and women between the ages of 25 and 44 years old. Policies that support families help the State attract and retain women of childbearing age in the labor force.

This compassionate policy shift-- with minimal impact on the State's budget-- would support those coping with the loss of a child. Of particular concern to MFN are those who experience the loss of an infant during the postpartum period. Families need time to attend to the physical and mental health of a new mother after birth. Handling postpartum depression, coupled with grieving the loss of an infant, requires time.

We support the sponsors' intent to amend the bill to grant a State employee who experiences the loss of a newborn within the first six months of life the full parental leave to which they would have been entitled as new parents had the baby lived. This compassionate interpretation of the law would enable employees to begin to cope with the physical toll of birth and the emotional impact of loss.

MFN respectfully urges favorable consideration of HB 52.

