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SB 485 Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications
FAVORABLE
Senate Finance Committee
February 16, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Beidel, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. AARP, which advocates for the more than two million Marylanders age 50 and older supports SB 485 Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications. We thank Senator Hayes for sponsoring SB 485.

AARP is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans aged 50 and older and their families. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders achieve financial and health security and supporting critical safety nets for seniors and low-income households in the state.

SB 485 modifies the law governing application, administration, and enforcement of the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program. It includes provisions related to the payment of contributions, the calculation of the average weekly wage, the submission of claims for benefits, the application of the Program to self-employed individuals, the satisfaction of Program requirements through private employer plans or insurance, and the use of contributions or other funding by the Secretary of Labor.

According to AARP Public Policy Institute, only one and seven workers in the private sector has employer-provided paid family leave. Among caregivers who left the workforce, just over half say they quit their jobs because they did not have the flexibility to keep working and provide elder care. Whether giving or receiving care, older workers are likely to need the time, access to health benefits, and job security that the Family Leave Act provides.

AARP believes Maryland has made significant strides in supporting Maryland's more than 730,000 family caregivers, however, we still have work to do to enable workers to take care of themselves and their loved ones. Passing the Maryland Family Leave Act was and will be a huge step in providing that benefit. It is our belief that the law needs clarifying to be effectively implemented.

AARP recommends that states implement policies that strengthen financial security for employed family caregivers and making sure this bill is implemented correctly is critical. We encourage a FAVORABLE report on SB 485. For further information please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

