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HB 102 Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Revisions
Senate Finance Committee
April 4, 2025
FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Good afternoon, Senator Beidle and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Tammy Bresnahan, and I serve as the Senior Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. We represent more than 850,000 members across the state. AARP Maryland supports several of the technical provisions in HB 102. However, we strongly oppose the House-amended version of the bill, which would delay implementation of the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program by 18 months.

This delay would leave thousands of Marylanders—especially older adults and their family caregivers—without access to critical paid leave benefits they have been counting on. While we support the technical updates in the bill, we cannot support it with the delay included. We respectfully urge the committee to amend the bill to remove the 18-month postponement.

Older Marylanders would be disproportionately affected by this delay. Many are still working while also providing unpaid care to spouses, adult children, aging parents, or siblings. For them, paid leave isn't a luxury—it's a lifeline. AARP Maryland has long advocated for the needs of caregivers and older workers. Delaying FAMLI implementation forces them to keep choosing between their health and their financial security.

AARP Maryland, in partnership with the Time to Care Coalition and others, has fought for comprehensive paid family and medical leave that reflects our five core policy principles:

1. The program must be cost-effective for workers, employers, and the government.
2. It must be inclusive, covering all working people equally.
3. It should include a broad, realistic definition of family.
4. It must offer up to 12 weeks of leave with adequate wage replacement.
5. It must protect workers from retaliation for taking leave.

Older Marylanders have already waited too long. Many are recovering from surgery, managing chronic conditions, or caring for loved ones with serious illnesses. Without paid leave, they risk their jobs, their health, and their financial stability. Maryland made history by passing paid family leave in 2022. Delaying its implementation undermines that progress and sends the wrong message to workers and families.

The Maryland Department of Labor has already made significant progress. As of its January 2025 FAMLII briefing, the program is 70% ready to begin collecting contributions by summer 2025—right on schedule. Arguments for a delay based on federal uncertainty are unfounded. The FAMLII program is state-funded, and no other state with similar programs is pausing implementation for these reasons.

A delay would impact more than 247,000 Marylanders—many of them older adults and caregivers—who urgently need access to paid leave. These are people facing cancer treatment, joint replacement surgery, or caring for a spouse with dementia. They should not have to choose between a paycheck and caring for themselves or a loved one.

We respectfully urge you to stand with older Marylanders, caregivers, and working families. Please remove the delay provision from HB 102 and allow the FAMLII program to move forward as planned. Maryland's older adults deserve the dignity, support, and economic security that paid leave provides. For follow-up, please contact Hank Greenberg at hgreenberg@aarp.org.