



TESTIMONY FOR HB0536

Employment Discrimination - Reasonable Accommodations - Disabilities Due to Childbirth, Menopause, and Related Medical Conditions

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Smith

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0536 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Women make up over 51% of the workforce in Maryland. However, accommodations for medical issues that directly affect women are rare. This bill supports women by considering disabilities caused or contributed to by pregnancy [or], childbirth, menopause, or a related medical condition as temporary disabilities for all job-related purposes including under any health or temporary disability insurance or sick leave plan available in connection with employment.

Businesses will be required to make accommodations for pregnant women, women who have recently given birth, and women with other female medical issues the same way as they are applied to other temporary disabilities. Matters such as the commencement and duration of leave, the availability of extensions of leave, the accrual of seniority and other benefits and privileges, reinstatement, and payment under any health or temporary disability insurance or sick leave plan, formal or informal, will be applied in the same way as someone with other medical conditions that are currently considered under temporary disability definition.

If we are to cultivate and retain our workforce, women should get as much consideration as men.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.