



**Testimony for the House Appropriations Committee
February 11, 2020**

**HB 523 – State Personnel – Employee Accommodations – Pregnancy
and Childbirth**

JOSEPH SPIELBERGER
PUBLIC POLICY COUNSEL

FAVORABLE

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION
FOUNDATION OF
MARYLAND

MAIN OFFICE
& MAILING ADDRESS
3600 CLIPPER MILL ROAD
SUITE 350
BALTIMORE, MD 21211
T/410-889-8555
or 240-274-5295
F/410-366-7838

FIELD OFFICE
6930 CARROLL AVENUE
SUITE 610
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912
T/240-274-5295

WWW.ACLU-MD.ORG

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
JOHN HENDERSON
PRESIDENT

The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 523, which would strengthen reasonable accommodation protections for state employees with a limitation caused by, or contributed to by pregnancy or childbirth.

Despite the enactment of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act at the federal level, pregnant women, particularly low-wage workers in male-dominated industries, are routinely pushed out of the workplace by ostensibly “neutral” employment practices. Employers may refuse to grant pregnant workers minor accommodations, like light-duty work, that they regularly grant other workers with temporary physical impairments. This discrimination against pregnant workers and mothers contributes to the gender wage gap and to workplace inequality.

In 2013, Maryland enacted the Reasonable Accommodations for Disabilities Due to Pregnancy Act, which has helped many pregnant workers in Maryland get reasonable accommodations that allow them to continue working during their pregnancies. Maryland law also allows employers to provide unpaid leave as an accommodation to pregnant workers. However, this is often not the appropriate response if the worker can otherwise be reasonably accommodated, and does not otherwise desire to suspend employment.

As employees already face wage gaps and gender discrimination in the workplace, HB 523 is an important step to ensure they are not further punished for pregnancy and childbirth.

For the foregoing reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 523.