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**HB712: Labor and Employment – Leave with Pay – Bereavement Leave**  
**(Family Bereavement Act)**

**Economic Matters Committee SUPPORT FOR HB712**

To Delegate Dereck E. Davis, Economic Matters Chair, Vice Chair and Committee  
Members:

I am moved by both my work with grieving clients as well as my own personal experience with losses to write in support for the Family Bereavement Leave. As a clinical social worker I have seen grief play out as a young adult's loss of their sibling, a widower losing his spouse of 60 years, or a parent facing their child's premature death. I have seen grief reactions of keening, and I have seen people respond with stoicism. The mind-boggling question of "how am I supposed to continue in this world without them?" is expressed in many different ways.

Bereavement is an extremely individual and unpredictable process that can exhaust us emotionally, physically, and mentally. In my own experience of my father's death, I followed a dear friend's advice: sleep as much as your body wants and/or needs, try to get outside and walk at least 10 minutes a day, and try to eat at least one healthy meal daily. For me, this looked like sleeping 15 hours a night, housemates walking outside with me, and friends bringing by meals to counteract my delivery pizza intake.

What I have seen in my own life and in my work, is that it is essential to have adequate time and space for grief. The Family Bereavement Act would allow for healing after loss, and to do so without fear of financial stress or job security. It validates that to adequately mourn is messy and private and personal. To be denied this with a speedy return to work would benefit no one.

I ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB712.

Respectfully,

Victoria Ringo

