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## **Title**

Labor and Employment - Leave With Pay - Bereavement Leave  
(Family Bereavement Act)

## **Sponsored by**

Delegates [Boyce](#), [Bridges](#), [Conaway](#), [Haynes](#), [Lehman](#), [Shetty](#), [Smith](#), [Wells](#), and [P. Young](#)

## **Status**

In the House - Hearing 2/25 at 1:00 p.m.

## **Analysis**

[Fiscal and Policy Note](#)

### **Synopsis**

Authorizing employees of certain employers to use certain leave with pay for bereavement leave in the event of the death of an immediate family member or a pet of the employee.

As a Firefighter/EMT, I see families lose their loved ones on a weekly, sometimes daily, basis. Many times, family members are not prepared to hear the words telling them that their loved one is dead, and even when they are "prepared," I have to wonder how much one can truly prepare to have one of their strongest bonds ripped away from them without having any control. Most people need to take time to get affairs in order for burial, arrangements for a funeral, coordination of family and friends traveling to pay their respects, and once all of that is said and done, mental health becomes a focus as they start moving through the grieving process.

As a Mental Health First Aid Instructor and First Responder, I am very much in tune with how important the grieving process can be. While it may not seem like people can truly benefit from only one or two days of time away from work in these situations, I can speak for certainty that having this time available has been proven to help individuals recognize that their lives have changed. It allows people to process what their life may look like moving forward, and to come up with a plan of how they will recover emotionally. In fact, it has been shown that many cases of drug addiction have resulted in individuals not being allowed the proper amount of time to adjust to their new life. Human beings are meant to bond with one another. It is an innate part of who we are. When we have developed a bond so strong that we love unconditionally, trust immensely, and give of ourselves freely - the types of bonds that we share with family members, the breaking of that bond can best be described by the words of my former patient's family member. "Some events are so tragic that they cut through your mind like a razor blade and leave you feeling profound loss. Loss for that person, but also lost yourself."

Requiring an individual to ignore their emotional well-being and report to work at a time when they are functioning in “survival mode” is tantamount to cruel and unusual punishment, and these people didn't commit a crime. Laws are often established to protect those without the resources to stand up for themselves, and approving the Family Bereavement Act establishes this protection. In many ways, this can be viewed as closing a loophole that some employers take advantage of when they know that their employees cannot afford to take any unscheduled time off.

For all of these reasons and many more that you will hear today, and as a Maryland resident, I humbly ask for a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB 712.

Respectfully,

Mark Driscoll