



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

Alzheimer's
Association,
Maryland Chapters

Baltimore Jewish
Council

Catholic Charities

Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council

Church of the Brethren

Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland

Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County

Jewish Community
Relations Council of
Greater Washington

Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland

Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging

Maryland Catholic
Conference

Mental Health
Association of Maryland

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter

Presbytery of Baltimore

The Coordinating
Center

MSCAN Co-Chairs:
Carol Lienhard
Kimberly Burton
443-901-1550 x 210

HB 839

Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment

House Economic Matters Committee February 24, 2020

Support

MSCAN is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that supports policies that meet the housing and care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income senior citizens.

MSCAN supports HB 839, which establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. Through this program, employees may take up to 12 weeks of paid leave from their jobs to care for new children, elderly family members, family members being deployed, or for themselves. HB 839 is especially important for Maryland's senior community because it allows older adult workers to address their own health needs and enable caregivers of older adults to balance their work and caregiving responsibilities.

Older workers need paid leave to manage their own health while continuing to work. Labor force participation rates for both men and women over 65 have climbed in recent years, especially after the Great Recession.¹ At the same time, older adults are more likely to suffer from serious health conditions that require regular care.² In order for older workers to stay healthy and productive, they need to be able to take paid time away from work to manage their health.

As our population ages and life expectancy increases, more workers will take on caregiving roles for older family members. Family caregivers need paid leave to care for elderly parents and relatives that may be facing serious health conditions, such as stroke or cancer. In less than 15 years, the number of Marylanders who are 65 and older will grow by almost 30%, increasing the need for a paid family leave policy that addresses the needs of older adults in Maryland. HB 839 will increase the health and wellbeing of older adults and their caretakers.

Caring for an older family member can negatively impact an employee's work situation and health. Of caregivers who take time off, 48 percent report losing income.³ In addition, caregivers experience elevated levels of stress, depression, and chronic disease. Older adults and caregivers should not have to choose between treating a serious health condition or caring for a family member and maintaining their economic security.

For these reasons, MSCAN urges a favorable report on HB 839.

¹ US Census. 2018. American Community Survey.

² National Partnership for Women & Families. (2017, June). Our Aging, Caring Nation: Why a U.S. Paid Leave Plan Must Provide More Than Time to Care for New Children. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/caregivingreport>

³ Families and Work Institute. http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/elder_care.pdf