



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 27, 2020

SB 539

**Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment
(Time to Care Act of 2020)**

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Senate Bill 539 establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance program in the state, through which employees may take up to twelve weeks of paid leave from their jobs when they are:

- welcoming a new child from birth, adoption, or foster care placement;
- suffering serious health conditions or disabilities;
- involved in a relative’s military deployment or caring for a wounded service member; or
- caring for aging parents or family members with critical needs.

The Conference supports efforts that increase the dignity of a person’s work as well as expand opportunities to care for themselves and their families during times of critical need, from the welcoming of a new child into the family through caring for aging parents, and every stage in between. In Maryland, only seventeen percent of working individuals have access to paid family leave, causing those who don’t to bear the devastating burden of whether to prioritize going to work or taking critically-necessary time to care for themselves or their families. Low-income workers are particularly harmed by this lack of leave, though the problem effects workers in every industry across the state.

Taking necessary time to care for one’s family in times of incredible importance and need is crucial in developing healthy families that can grow and prosper, without concerns about losing a paycheck.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 539.