



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**HB 56 – Labor and Employment – Leave With Pay – Bereavement Leave
House Economic Matters Committee
January 28, 2021**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 56 – Labor and Employment – Leave With Pay – Bereavement Leave. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

Losing a family member is devastating. Oftentimes people never truly recover from the shock and the loss. Every one of us has experienced this and knows the level of emotional distress and stress a loss can cause. From consoling other family members to planning a funeral and putting your life back together, there is no easy way to confront the death of loved one. Throughout the entire process of putting your life back together, it will be necessary to take time off work.

Workers might hesitate to breach the topic about taking leave from work, unsure of how their employer might respond, and unclear whether they will be able to make ends meet without pay. There is no federal bereavement law, but, with HB 56, we have the opportunity to ensure that Maryland's workers have the flexibility to attend to one of the most important things in life, without fearing for their own economic security in the process.

For compassion and empathy, on behalf of workers who have lost loved ones, **we urge a favorable report on HB 56.**