



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**House Bill 0375
Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program -
Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2021)
Economic Matters Committee – February 16, 2021
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2021 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB0375 - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2021). This bill will establish an insurance fund pool beginning January 1, 2022, to provide up to twelve weeks of paid leave to an individual who is taking leave to care for a newborn or newly adopted child, a family member with a serious health condition, themselves if they have a serious health condition, or a military service member who is next-of-kin or has a specified need because of the military deployment of a family member. Benefits range up to 90 percent of the employee's average weekly wage, depending on the employee's income. Each employee and employer must contribute to the insurance fund in equal and sufficient amounts to fund and administer the program (estimated at .67 percent of an employee's wages). A self-employed individual has the option to participate. A covered individual may submit a claim beginning July 1, 2023. The fund will be administered by the State Department of Labor, Division of Unemployment Insurance.

This legislation is important to ensuring that all working Marylanders can afford to take leave when they need time to care for family members or themselves. According to the US Census Bureau, in 76 percent of Maryland households with children – more than 970,000 homes – all parents have paying jobs. Further, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, 80 percent of Black mothers, 51 percent of Latina mothers, and 50 percent of White mothers in Maryland are the breadwinners for their families. Simply stated: paid family and medical leave in Maryland will mean an employee will not have to choose between job and family, will help keep qualified workers in the labor force, and will reduce employee turnover.

WDC has a particular interest in this bill because women make up nearly 50 percent of Maryland's labor force, are 33 percent of its business owners, and by and large, are the individuals in our society who take the primary caretaking role for our families – a role so critical that our society cannot function without it. Unpaid leave for many families translates to women oftentimes not taking the leave they are entitled to take. Nearly 25 percent of women take 10 or fewer days of their unpaid parental leave because they simply cannot afford to go without pay.

We ask for your support for HB0375 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Respectfully,

Diana Conway
President