

**TESTIMONY OF JESSICA GORSKI**

**Maryland WISE Women, Healthcare Huddle Facilitator**

**IN SUPPORT OF HB 375**

**“Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program**

**- Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2021)”**

**Submitted to the House Economic Matters Committee**

**February 16, 2021**

**Position: SUPPORT**

Chairman Davis and members of the House Economic Matters Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 375 – The Time to Care Act. My name is Jessica Gorski and I am the Healthcare Huddle Facilitator for Maryland WISE Women, an organization of over 800 women in Anne Arundel County. I also serve on the WISE Leadership Committee. In addition, I represent WISE as a member organization of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC), a group of grassroots organizations consisting of over 30,000 Marylanders statewide. We strongly encourage a favorable report for HB 375 which establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program through which employees may take up to 12 weeks of paid leave from their jobs to care for new children, other family members with serious health conditions or disabilities, or themselves.

The vast majority of working people in the United States do not have paid family leave through their jobs. In Maryland, even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is inaccessible for 56 percent of working people. Marylanders need a real policy solution to address the nation’s paid leave crisis. Paid family and medical leave means greater economic security, stronger families and businesses, greater equity regardless of a person’s job or health status and more workplace equality for women. People – especially women – aren’t forced to leave the labor force to care for their families or health, reducing turnover for employers and boosting the economy.

Thank you for your consideration. WISE urges a favorable vote on HB 375.