

Testimony in Support of SB 211: The Time to Care Act of 2021

Submitted by Kendra Massey

ADDRESS

I am pleased to submit this testimony on SB 211, the Time to Care Act of 2021. I am a proud member of 1199SEIU and would like to tell you how important paid family leave would be to me.

Like many working parents, I've struggled with juggling home and work duties during this pandemic. I've worked at Chase Brexton for 3 years. I love my job there. I also love my kids, of course: my six-year-old son, who started first grade last fall, and my one-year old daughter.

My son has suffered from not having a proper learning environment in online school. It really broke my heart to come home from work every day and find out that he was having a hard time doing school on the computer.

I knew I needed to be at home to help him. Luckily, I received extended family leave through the CARES Act. This allowed me to have three days off a week to help my son with his school issues. For two months, from September to early November 2020, I was able to work with him to make sure he was doing well in school and coping with the stress of the pandemic. The leave was a godsend, even though I received only 2/3 of my regular pay during those two months. It was worth it so I could be there for my son. I'm happy to report that he is now doing well.

I'm grateful that I had that time with my son but it will be a full year before I or others in my situation can take any leave again, even EFMLA. And there are a lot of people who have been in my situation: just about everyone with kids in my facility took the EFMLA leave offered to them.

Maryland needs to do more to help working families by passing a paid family leave bill. Many working families don't have paid leave through their jobs, so they have to either take unpaid time off to care for their family members when they are sick. Paid leave legislation in Maryland would help many people in this state, including working moms like me who need support to keep our children safe and healthy during this difficult time. Other states and countries have done it. We should, too.

I urge you to pass the Time to Care Act of 2021.