

**TESTIMONY OF JESSICA GORSKI**

**Commissioner, Anne Arundel County Commission for Women**

**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 currently serve as a Commissioner on the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women. The Commission has identified this as part of our priority legislation for 2021 and we strongly encourage a favorable report for HB 375 establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program through which employees may take up to 12 weeks of 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.

In 76 percent of all Maryland households with children – more than 970,000 homes – all parents have paying jobs. In addition, Women’s wages support many of their households. In Maryland, 80 percent of Black mothers, 51 percent of Latina mothers and 50 percent of white mothers are key family breadwinners. Women make up nearly half of Maryland’s labor force (49 percent) and one-third of its business owners (33 percent). With the passage of this legislation, 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. The Anne Arundel County Commission for Women urges a favorable vote on HB 375.