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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB211/HB375**

**Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment  
(Time to Care Act of 2021)**

**TO:** Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and the members of the Finance Committee

**FROM:** Robert Singer, MD

My name is Robert Singer MD. I live in Rockville in District 17. This testimony is in support of SB211/HB375, the Time to Care Act of 2021.

I have worked for four decades as a family physician. I have seen first hand the courageous resilience of families responding to sudden illness and to chronic debilitating disease. Often a choice has to be made between working or caring for a family member. So often family members make the difficult and selfless choice of leaving work to do what must be done to care for a loved one in need. This noble call to service is wrenching for many. Jobs can be lost. Even if it is possible to return to work, income is forfeited. Just at the time of greatest need financial resources are stretched to the breaking point.

It has been said in Maryland that "we take care of our neighbors." As family members care for their loved ones, our community has to do its part. Paid family and medical leave allows families to stay together in tough times. It strengthens families. It encourages return to work by keeping the light on and the job still there. It is less expensive than paying for skilled and unskilled help to support the care for loved ones. Close family members often can reach their loved relatives in ways that strangers cannot. We want to encourage this kind of family cohesiveness, so we need to support it.

Jobs should mean a living wage with protections for illness and family needs. Such communities are stronger, more compassionate, and such support encourages a faster return to health. Since we already care for each other, let such times of extra need not be complicated by loss of income and employment. A fair society sets expectations of care and this legislation would provide much needed support, especially for workers who would be most impacted by the loss of financial stability.

**For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report of SB211.**