



Senate Bill 211

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

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Finance Committee

Date: January 28, 2021

From: Drew Jabin

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 211. This bill would create and implement a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program funded through shared employee and employer contributions. The Program would provide up to 24 weeks of benefits to covered individuals taking leave due to specific personal and family circumstances.

Under state law, counties would have no choice but to fund these mandated employer contributions—competing for limited local funds against school construction, public safety, roadway maintenance, and other essential public services. The entitlement to benefits under SB 211 far exceeds any statutory length of leave, presenting innumerable challenges for employers. Also concerning is the potential for employer contribution rates for this proposed program to eventually increase to maintain fund solvency, as more employees take advantage of this benefit.

Local jurisdictions would incur significant costs as a result of paying half of the FAMLI contribution rate as well as incur programming costs to their payroll systems. Furthermore, to the extent that local government employees take more leave, the FAMLI program may overburden other employees and create additional personnel expenses for overtime costs for local jurisdictions, especially for law enforcement and other agencies that provide 24/7 coverage.

This legislation does not appropriately balance the goals of helping employees with the economic realities that counties are facing, and accordingly MACo urges the Committee to issue a **UNFAVORABLE** report on **SB 211**.