

Testimony in Support of SB 211 “Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2021)” - Sen. Hayes

I support SB 211, 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.

Most all of us have either personally experienced having to give care for a child or another family member, or to take care of ourselves during a serious illness. Or, we know those who have. I am one of those people. I was fortunate in that I was able to use my job’s FMLA to help me do this. I wish it were extended to all those in Maryland. Not just because it is a ‘nice’ thing to do, but because for many families, it’s almost essential, in order to allow them to continue to make a living, pay the bills, feed and care for their families.

I know so many people, friends and neighbors who literally have to choose between continuing to work and giving care. And many of those people cannot afford that choice, as not working would place them in an untenable position financially. This is indeed a basic quality of life issue. We are the only industrialized nation that does not afford this type of FMLA supports this assertion. We have to ask ourselves what kind of a country, state, are we to not provide this basic safety net, a net that allows people not to fall when making these important decisions to care for their families.

Respectfully,

Renee Cantori
Annapolis