



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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## Testimony on Maryland Senate Bill 211

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

TO: Sen. Kelley, Chair, and members of the Senate Finance Committee  
FROM: Jennifer Mendes Dwyer, Deputy Executive Director, Progressive Maryland  
DATE: January 26, 2021  
POSITION: Support

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on SB 211. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots, nonprofit organization with 9 chapters from Frederick to the Lower Shore and more than 100,000 members and supporters who live in nearly every legislative district in the state. In addition, there are dozens of affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our strong support for this bill.

It's clearly unacceptable that in 2021 our state and nation force so many women to have to choose between money and the health of their families. Maryland currently only guarantees (some) workers up to 5 days of paid sick leave, and as anyone who has ever welcomed a child into their family knows, it's completely absurd to expect that a woman, especially if she's recovering from giving birth, is going to be ready and able to return to work on that timeline. Almost every other country on the entire planet has figured out how to implement some form of paid family leave, so of course we can as well.

Paid family leave is not just ethical, it's economically smart. Without paid family leave, Marylanders are forced to leave the labor force to care for their family's or their own health. This sets them back in terms of career advancement, salaries and total earnings, retirement savings, and, because we still don't have a single payer healthcare system, ability to stay healthy, all of which have negative impacts on Maryland's economy. Women are breadwinners in a majority of Maryland's households, so even a period of unpaid family leave places families in financial jeopardy. Paid family leave creates greater economic security for Marylanders and also benefits employers by reducing turnover, saving them the costs of seeking out and training new employees and empowering them to retain skilled, committed workers.

We urge a favorable report on SB 211.