

January 26, 2021

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Three East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Testimony in **Support of SB 0211 – Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2021)**

Dear Chair Kelley:

I am writing in support of **SB 0211**, the *Time to Care Act*. I believe that this legislation is of extreme importance to all Marylanders. The *Time to Care Act* would establish a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program, similar to unemployment insurance. This legislation would provide workers up to 12 weeks of leave with partial wage replacement when a critical need arises. No one should have to choose between the job they need and the family they love.

As an oncology nurse, I have seen many of my patients struggle with the financial toxicity of cancer care. For some of the more fortunate individuals Short Term Disability or FMLA offers a safety net as they recover from chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. For others, they have to live with the constant threat and stress of possibly losing their jobs, homes and cars. I once had a patient who was forced to choose between buying necessary medicines and buying oil to heat her old farmhouse. While she had a few months of emergency support to cover her heating bill, her financial stress was unending. Caregivers of cancer patients also face this toxic stress with trying to juggle being present for their loved ones and keeping their jobs and often their health insurance.

As a daughter, I too faced stress related to caring for my father as he faced a two year battle with kidney cancer. As a nurse in Baltimore, I had one category of “paid time off.” This was for vacation time, sick time and FMLA. My dad was able to stay at home during his final weeks, however, I returned back to work with zero hours of “paid time off.” This meant if one of my children had gotten sick or we had another family emergency, I would have had to take unpaid leave.

The U.S. is the only industrialized country that does not guarantee some form of paid family leave for workers. Maryland should join with the nine other states and Washington, DC that offer or will offer paid family leave by passing the *Time to Care Act*.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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