

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 211** – *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 211, the Time to Care Act of 2021. As a working mother, caregiver, and nurse, I clearly understand the importance of paid family leave to my patients' economic security and health. Marylanders should not have to choose between losing their employment and caring for a newborn, adopted child, or sick family member. Most Marylanders do not have paid family leave through their jobs and more than half of our workers do not have access to unpaid family leave. Everyone should have time to care for loved ones who have health care needs, disabilities, or are affected by the military deployment of a loved one.

My own family would have benefitted from having paid family leave. Last year, right before the pandemic hit, my mother, age eighty-seven, could no longer afford to stay at her assisted living facility because her care level increased, so she had to move in with one of my sisters. My mother had several health conditions, including congestive heart failure. She had been managing well in the assisted living facility, where she received nursing care, help with her medications, opportunities for socialization, and even limited physical activity. Once she left the facility, however, and moved in with my sister, she spent her days mainly in front of a television with little social interaction other than with my sister and her husband. My sister had to work a full-time job in addition to running a restaurant that she and her husband were trying to keep afloat despite Covid-19 restrictions. Though her heart was in the right place, my sister was incapable of giving my mother the care she needed. As a nurse, I was the obvious choice to step in and manage my mother's health care, but I could not take time away from my job to travel out of state and spend several weeks putting in place the supports my mother needed or even be there to care for her myself. I could not take the time to care for my mother and I deeply regret it. She passed away on Christmas Eve 2020.

According to the Pew Research Center, of 41 developed countries, the United States is the only nation that does not have paid family leave. Our citizens face difficult choices and economic hardship, stress, and other burdens because they choose to leave employment to care for family members, but it does not have to be this way. A Harvard Business Review analysis shows that paid family leave would provide greater economic security for families, more workplace equality for women, and healthier families and businesses. Smaller businesses would be better able to compete with larger businesses, and Maryland companies would be more attractive to employees and more competitive in the national and global marketplace.

A poll commissioned by Maryland Family Network shows that 86% of all Maryland voters favor creation of a family and medical leave insurance program. The program has strong bipartisan support and would only cost workers three to five dollars a week in payroll deductions. Workers should have the right to partial wage replacement for up to 12 weeks to care for a new child, a sick loved one, or their own illness. Maryland should join other states who have passed paid family leave legislation and give its citizens the time to care. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Laura Allen, RN*

Laura Allen, MA, MS, RN  
803 Count Flame Court  
Westminster, MD 21157  
240-893-5920  
lauralallen27@outlook.com