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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB211/HB375**

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

**TO:** Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and members of the Finance Committee

**FROM:** Heidi Rhodes

My name is Heidi Rhodes and I live in Colesville, District 14. I am providing this testimony in support of SB211/HB375, the Time to Care Act.

Rabbi Hillel teaches us that we can't separate ourselves from our community; we all have a responsibility for each other's wellbeing and care. We must make sure that all people can take time to be with their families and attend to their own health. This teaching from Jewish tradition drives my support of this legislation.

Nobody should have to choose between their job and caring for themselves or their family. Nearly everyone needs time away from work at some point to care for a relative, deal with a serious personal illness, or welcome a baby, but many Marylanders do not receive paid leave benefits from their employers and can't afford to take unpaid leave.

This dilemma of choosing to be paid or to care for a sick family member was common in my community of single parents. I was lucky to have a limited amount of leave working for the federal government and I made the moral decision to use this to watch a neighbor's sick child rather than see them not going to work and not getting paid for that day.

Also, when I got married and knew I wanted children I began saving all my annual and sick leave. Although I was lucky to have this leave, in order to have money coming in after the birth of my child, I had to use almost all of this leave for the 6 weeks I took off. Thus, when I returned to work, I had no leave available for doctor's appointments or any emergencies at day care.

These two personal examples have taught me the incredible importance of paid family and medical leave. As such, **I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB211.**