



**LETTER OF OPPOSITION ON BEHALF OF  
MARYLAND TOURISM COALITION**

**IN OPPOSITION OF SB0211 - PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM**

Before the Senate Finance Committee, January 28, 2021

Dear Madam Chair & Committee Members,

My name is Ruth Toomey, Executive Director of Maryland Tourism Coalition, a 50-year old organization that represents the various services, attractions, organizations and accommodations that make up the State's Industry. MTC is the voice of our state's diverse tour and travel community, bringing together the entire industry to enhance business growth and to promote Maryland as a first-class destination for visitors. On behalf of our 1,000+ members, I would like to express our opposition of SB0211.

Tourism is vital to Maryland's economy! In a typical year, tourism supports 226,000 direct and indirect jobs, making it the 11<sup>th</sup> largest industry in the state. Visitors to Maryland spend nearly \$18.6 billion in Maryland each year and those same visitors generate close to \$2.6 billion in state and local taxes. Without tourism in the state of Maryland, each household would pay \$1,175 more in local taxes.

But as we all well know, this past year has been anything but typical. Our industry was among the hardest hit due to the pandemic. Many of our members have been forced to close and some are even now unable to reopen. 95% of all tourism businesses are small businesses and many are hanging on by a thread. The Paid Family and Medical Leave Program would be largely detrimental to many of our tourism businesses. The bill establishes the FAML I Fund, which will consist of contributions from employees, employers and self-employed individuals. Beginning January 1, 2021, each employee, employer and self-employed individual shall contribute to the fund. The total rate of contribution: 1) may not exceed 0.75% of an employee's wages, 2) shall be applied to all wages up to and including the Social Security wage base, 3) shall be shared equally by employers and employees, and 4) shall be sufficient to fund the benefits payable. This would be a financial burden on top of an already struggling industry. Not only is the large cost a problem, but the time and resources it would take to manage and account for this program would be devastating for small businesses.

On behalf of the Maryland Tourism Coalition, we respectfully request that you oppose SB0211.

Sincerely,

**Ruth Toomey**

Ruth Toomey  
MTC Executive Director