

**TESTIMONY ON HB8 - POSITION:FAVORABLE
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT – FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM –
ESTABLISHMENT (TIME TO CARE ACT OF 2022)**

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Arthur Smith
January 22, 2022

My name is Arthur Smith, I am a resident of District 22, and I am writing to you today to express my strong support for for HB 8, the Time to Care Act of 2022.

This piece of legislation will improve the lives of children and families of all backgrounds, across the state of Maryland. I strongly encourage you to support and move this bill forward. I am a supporter of Paid Family and Medical Leave because I have seen firsthand, how important is is for young children to have their parents at home with them when they are first born, sick, or in need of additional attention. I have 4 nieces and nephews under the age of 5 and understand that parental involvement at this age is absolutely necessary for a child's survival and full development. Paid Family and Medical leave guarantees that parents will be home to take care of their children and give them the attention and support they need. But even more, child development in the first few weeks of life has been shown to be absolutely critical to emotional and social bonding and feelings of security. I am certain that many members of this legislative body benefited from having a parent to watch over and care for them in their first years of life. That benefit should not be a privilege for the select few of this state but rather should be a guaranteed right for all. "I asked my brother Aaron, who lives in DC, what the DC paid family leave program meant to him when he and his wife Shavanna had a baby. He said: "It was amazingly valuable to us as a family to know we would have the additional support when we were both taking time off to care for a newborn." If this body is truly committed to improving the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children and families in Maryland, then it will move HB 8 forward with no hesitation. I am a proud District 22 resident and believe that the evidence is clear regarding this piece of legislation.

An OpinionWorks study conducted from December 15, 2021- January 10, 2022, showed overwhelming support for paid family leave in Maryland that crosses all partisan and geographic lines. Results showed 88% of Maryland voters specifically favor creation of "a family and medical leave insurance program that would provide workers with partial wage replacement for up to 12 weeks when they need time away from work to care for a new child, seriously ill family member, or their own serious health condition." The numerous stories and data available about paid family and medical leave insurance programs show the positive impact it will have on Marylanders. The Time to Care Act will help address the economic hardship, stress, and other burdens that come into play when caring for new babies, loved ones with serious health conditions, or yourself. Employees' ability to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave will help Maryland families meet their caregiving, employment, and financial needs and commitments while caring for their family. A true paid family and medical leave policy must be cost-effective for workers, employers, and the government with employers contributing at least as much as employees.

We must ensure that our paid family and medical leave program covers all working people, applies equally to everyone, covers all the well-established reasons people need leave, reflects an inclusive definition of family, and provides up to 12 weeks of leave and job security. No Marylander should have to choose between the job they need and the family they love when a medical crisis strikes or a new child is welcomed into the home, which is why we need comprehensive paid family and medical

leave in Maryland. HB 8 has all of these key components of a meaningful paid family and medical leave program, **and I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 8.**