

I am writing to voice my strong support for HB 8 “Labor and Employment-Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program-Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022)” and urge the General Assembly to pass it. My name is Sharon Nathanson, and I am a Baltimore City grandmother of a six-year-old, and a mother of a hard-working young woman who I see must make difficult choices about her work schedule and providing care of her child. Even today, many years later, after delivering a pre-mature baby weighing just over 2 lbs, and facing my own lengthy recovery, I remember I had to make gut wrangling decisions about whether I should stay home to watch my child or go to work. Fortunately, in my case, I had leave, some paid and some not, to cover me during that period. Many Maryland workers, mostly women, do not, particularly those workforce employees we depend on every day. They and are faced with difficult decisions regarding those dependent upon them.

This bill would allow support for Maryland’s families by allowing them to have paid family leave when needed in times of family stress, such as when a child is born or comes into a family through adoption, or when personal or family health needs inevitably arise. In fact, the last couple of years, living through COVID, has demonstrated why such leave is badly needed. We never thought people, primarily women, would be placed in the untenable situation of deciding to care for their children or others and keeping their jobs. Having leave available would mean not having to choose between a job and family responsibilities.

Such a bill is needed not only by families but also older adults and working people of all ages to have the support they need to receive and provide critical care. The law would also benefit employers as it would support worker retention by reducing turnover and lessen the need to be constantly hiring and training new employees. Nine states already have such programs and I urge you to pass such a program in Maryland. Please vote in favor of this legislation.

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