



House Bill 496

Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program

February 15, 2022

Position: Oppose

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

The *Restaurant Association of Maryland* opposes House Bill 496, which would establish a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program. This program would be funded through shared contributions by employees and employers.

Foodservice businesses continue to struggle from the effects of the COVID pandemic, amid continuing supply chain challenges, rising food and product costs, and labor shortages. Our industry has also been burdened with higher labor costs associated with annual minimum wage increases phased in through 2026 because of the law passed in 2019. Many foodservice businesses also had to switch to costlier disposable carryout containers when the polystyrene foam ban took effect in 2020.

In addition to the employer contribution required by this legislation, employers would also have to pay for replacement workers when employees take leave that would be allowed under this bill. Our industry simply cannot afford piling on yet another mandate that increases the cost of doing business, particularly when we haven't had time to recover from so many other financial hardships.

For these reasons, we oppose this legislation and request an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melvin R. Thompson".

Melvin R. Thompson
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs and Public Policy