

**Testimony to the House Economic Matters Committee
HB 8: Time to Care Act of 2022
Position: Favorable**

February 15, 2022

Delegate C. T. Wilson, Chair
House Economic Matters Committee
Room 231, HOB
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Cc: Members, House Economic Matters Committee

Honorable Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances financial justice and economic inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

MCRC is in support of HB 8.

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 oneself. 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.

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."

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. This is why we need comprehensive paid family and medical leave in Maryland. 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.

HB 8 has all of these key components of a meaningful paid family and medical leave program, and MCRC respectfully urges this committee to return a favorable report.

Thank you,
Marceline White
Executive Director

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