



# Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

**MSCAN**

AARP Maryland

Alzheimer's  
Association,  
Maryland Chapters

Baltimore Jewish  
Council

Catholic Charities

Central Maryland  
Ecumenical Council

Church of the Brethren

Episcopal Diocese of  
Maryland

Housing Opportunities  
Commission of  
Montgomery County

Jewish Community  
Relations Council of  
Greater Washington

Lutheran Office on  
Public Policy in  
Maryland

Maryland Association of  
Area Agencies on Aging

Maryland Catholic  
Conference

Mental Health  
Association of Maryland

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

National Association of  
Social Workers,  
Maryland Chapter

Presbytery of Baltimore

The Coordinating  
Center

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## HB 496

### Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment

#### House Economic Matters Committee

February 15, 2022

#### Support

*The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN) is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that supports policies that meet the housing, health and quality of care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.*

**MSCAN supports HB 496**, which establishes a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program. Through this program, employees may take up to 12 weeks of paid leave from their jobs to care for new children, elderly family members, family members being deployed, or for themselves. HB 496 is especially important for Maryland's senior community because it allows older adult workers to address their own health needs and enable caregivers of older adults to balance their work and caregiving responsibilities.

**Older workers need paid leave to manage their own health while continuing to work.** Labor force participation rates for both men and women over 65 have climbed in recent years, especially after the Great Recession.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, older adults are more likely to suffer from serious health conditions that require regular care.<sup>2</sup> In order for older workers to stay healthy and productive, they need to be able to take paid time away from work to manage their health.

**As our population ages and life expectancy increases, more workers will take on caregiving roles for older family members.** Family caregivers need paid leave to care for elderly parents and relatives that may be facing serious health conditions, such as stroke or cancer. In less than 15 years, the number of Marylanders who are 65 and older will grow by almost 30%, increasing the need for a paid family leave policy that addresses the needs of older adults in Maryland. Currently, one out of every four workers over 50 serve as a family caregiver, and access to paid family and medical leave is crucial for their financial security.<sup>3</sup> HB 496 will increase the health and wellbeing of older adults and their caretakers.

**Caring for an older family member can negatively impact an employee's work situation and health.** Of caregivers who take time off, 48 percent report losing income.<sup>4</sup> In addition, caregivers experience elevated levels of stress, depression, and chronic disease. Older adults and caregivers should not have to choose between treating a serious health condition or caring for a family member and maintaining their economic security.

**For these reasons, MSCAN urges a favorable report on HB 496.**

<sup>1</sup> US Census. 2018. American Community Survey.

<sup>2</sup> National Partnership for Women & Families. (2017, June). Our Aging, Caring Nation: Why a U.S. Paid Leave Plan Must Provide More Than Time to Care for New Children. Retrieved 20 December 2018, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/caregivingreport>

<sup>3</sup> US Senate. Special Committee on Aging. America's Aging Workforce: Opportunities and Challenges. <https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Aging%20Workforce%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Families and Work Institute. [http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/elder\\_care.pdf](http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/elder_care.pdf)