



Mr. Larry Douglass

SEIU Local 400PG

9700 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Testimony in FAVOR of HB 496
Labor and Employment – Family & Medical Leave Insurance Program –
Establishment

House Economic Matters Committee

February 15, 2022

1:00 PM

Presented to: C.T. Wilson, Chairman
By: Larry Douglass, SEIU Local 400PG

My name is Larry Douglass. I am a member of SEIU 400PG and work for Prince Georges County Public Schools testifying in FAVOR of HB 496.

I hope my own story is one that helps delegates understand what a positive difference having paid Family and Medical Leave can be for workers in Maryland.

I have worked for Prince Georges County Public Schools since November of 2007. During that time, with a desire to go to work every day and being blessed with good health, I was able to build up a total of almost 1,000 hours of sick leave.

In July of 2021 I sustained an off-the-job injury. This required me to undergo surgery. My doctor estimated that I would be unable to work for four months. It actually turned out to be almost seven months. During that time, I did not lose pay, thanks to the collective bargaining agreement benefits negotiated between my union and my employer.

While I was recuperating, I was able to continue to pay my bills, including for food, clothing, shelter and other necessities. I could concentrate my energy on healing and not worrying if about losing my job, my house or my car. Without this benefit I would have faced a world full of stress.

I was lucky by being in a job that provided union-negotiated sick leave benefits.

I was lucky by having a job I wanted to go to every day that allowed me to build up a large number of sick-leave hours.

I was lucky to have very good health – until I was injured and needed surgery.

I learned that most workers in Maryland do not have what I had – when I needed it most. How much stress must these folks be facing? How disruptive must this be to their families. Since we know many of us will be injured or get sick, we shouldn't need to rely on luck.

The Time to Care Act, or Paid Family & Medical Leave legislation would provide stability to the lives of workers, their families, their communities and to their employers. The bill would also lessen the stress families face if wage earners were injured or become seriously ill.

Mr. Chairman, we commend you for introducing this bill. Working Marylanders need it.

Thank you for your time. I ask that you pass HOUSE BILL 496. Thank you.