

**Testimony in Support of HB 8 “Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave
Insurance Program – Establishment”
House Economic Matters Committee
February 15, 2022**

FAVORABLE

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Harriet Rubinson

My name is Harriet Rubinson. I am a resident of District 11. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 496, which would establish a Paid Family and Medical Leave insurance program.

When asked why I am working to enact Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) in Maryland, I usually respond by saying that it is because it is an important and timely issue; or, that the United States is the only Western country that does not have a paid leave program; or that several other states have successfully introduced PFML; I may share that over 88% of Marylanders— of both parties— support PFML; and that Marylanders deserve to be able to care for their loved ones ...and themselves...when there’s a family challenge or a new child comes into the home. All of that is true.

But, as is true for almost all of us, I’ve had times in my life when I ..or a loved one.. needed care and support. When balancing - and choosing — between caring for a loved one or my job responsibilities or loss of income caused distress and conflict. I cared for my mother, father and...just last year...my sister in managing medical situations for protracted periods. I was fortunate that I was able to do so without forfeiting my job or compromising my income.

Except when caring for my mother over 30 years ago. That was before Federal Family Medical Leave (FMLA) was enacted, ensuring that one’s job would be held for 6 months in a large company. Since I had exhausted all my leave taking care of my mom, I now faced the decision of taking care of my mother at the end of her life — or losing my job.

Despite the consequences - economic, career, personal —I knew what my decision needed to be for my family. And the Sunday before I planned to speak to my boss about my decision and options the next day, my mother passed away. So I didn’t lose my job. But I experienced the anguish of that conflict.

But no one should have to make that decision between caring for their family and loved ones, and their jobs. Everyone should have “time to care” for the people they love. That’s why I support Paid Family and Medical Leave Act **HR 496** and hope your committee will help move this critical bill forward in Maryland this year.

Thank you,
Harriet Rubinson
50 Barbican Way
Pikesville, MD 21208
Hrubinson@gmail.co