

HB0008, Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022)

Testimony in **Support**

To: Chair Wilson and members of the House Economic Matters Committee

From: Arielle Juberg, Baltimore MD 21234

My name is Arielle Juberg. I am a resident of Baltimore County in District 8. I belong to Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) in Baltimore. SURJ is working in collaboration with Out for Justice. I belong to a church in Essex and volunteer at several organizations in Baltimore City. I am testifying in **support** of HB008, Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022).

HB008 is important to me because my family has experienced unexpected health emergencies. While I was in school for a public health degree, I learned about the lack of federal family and caregiving paid leave. We always heard that health emergencies could happen to anyone at any time. After I graduated, I learned this lesson first-hand. One of my parents fell outside, breaking their upper arm. Immediately, this disability upended their independent life. Days were filled with doctor's appointments and physical therapy. They could not drive to these appointments. They needed help with everyday tasks like dressing and cooking. My life was also upended. I moved home temporarily to help, eventually staying for several months. I was very lucky; I was in-between jobs and had the time to help. If I had been employed, it would have been impossible to hold down a job and take care of my parent. It is scary to think about what would have happened to my parent without anyone there to help them.

Too many people in Maryland have to choose between caring for a loved one and losing a paycheck. This horrible choice especially impacts lower-income workers of color. This difficult decision exists because our current public policy in Maryland does not support families and caregivers.

My church in Essex prides itself on being a welcoming, caring community. We all share news about illnesses, accidents, and births. We support each other with cards, trips to pick up groceries, and small gifts – but we're not equipped to support a family with their income over a long illness or after the birth of a baby. It isn't realistic to expect community groups to take on this role. This is an occasion where we need public policy to recognize the current burdens on families.

HB0008 is needed because every one of us will have a child, family member, or friend who needs care. Many of us will depend upon someone else to take care of us. It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to **support** HB008. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service.