

Oral Testimony

Thank you, Committee Chair Wilson, and Vice Chair Crosby for this opportunity.

Today, I am here in support of {[HB496](#)} - the Time to Care Act, which would establish a paid family leave insurance program for Marylanders.

In 2020, we had a valued employee who resigned because she had a serious health condition. She was offered unpaid leave, but this restricted her ability to collect unemployment. If the Time to Care Act had been in place then; she would not have had to make that decision and possibly returned to work when her health improved. This is just one example of how the Act could have had a positive impact on one employee.

Our company has recently become employee owned; a strategic business decision made for the betterment of our team. We strive every day to live our essential core values and foster a healthy work environment as well as have a positive impact on our communities and neighborhoods.

We support the Time to Care Act not only because it will benefit our co-owners, but also because we realize the benefits for all Marylanders, not just those who will receive the monetary support. By alleviating the financial hardship of caring for a new child, an ill family member or one's self we foster stronger communities. Additionally, such circumstance brings with it additional stress and burdens, by removing the monetary disadvantage of unpaid leave we promote a stronger Maryland. One person's hardship impacts us all; "it takes a village" not just to raise a child but to support those experiencing a health crisis.

The Time to Care Act will help address the economic hardship, stress, and other burdens that come occur when caring for new babies, or loved ones with serious health conditions, or yourself. 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.

No Marylander should have to choose between the job they need and the family they love. Every Marylander deserves a secure and prosperous life for themselves and their families, and paid family leave will get us one step closer.

For these reasons I humbly ask the committee for a favorable report on HB496. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ann Marie Buck

Director, Human Resources for A Few Cool Hardware Stores
Federal Hill Ace Hardware, Waverly Ace Hardware, and Canton Ace Hardware
Office: 1022 Binney Street Baltimore MD 21224
Email: annmarie@acehardwaredc.com