



# PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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## Testimony on Maryland House Bill 496

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

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

**FROM:** Christianne Marguerite, Director of Communications, Progressive Maryland

**DATE:** February 15, 2022

**POSITION:** Support

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB 496. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots nonprofit organization with 9 chapters from Frederick to the Lower Shore and more than 100,000 members and supporters who live in nearly every legislative district in the state. In addition, there are dozens of affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our **strong support for HB 496, the Time to Care Act of 2022.**

It is unacceptable that our state and nation still force workers to choose between their income and the health of their families. The U.S. is one of only a handful of countries in the world without a national paid leave policy, and it's the only industrialized country that fails to offer workers this basic guarantee. With this bill, the State of Maryland has the opportunity to lead the nation in beginning to make this shameful situation right. Paid family and medical leave policies have overwhelming public support from Maryland voters, as demonstrated by extensive polling, and states that have enacted similar programs in recent years have fared well.

Paid family and medical leave isn't just ethical, it's economically smart. Without a paid leave policy, many Maryland workers are forced to leave the labor force to care for their own health or the health of loved ones. This sets them back in terms of career advancement, salaries and total earnings, and retirement savings – all of which have negative consequences for Maryland's economy. In addition to creating greater economic security for Marylanders, the paid family and medical leave program, this bill will benefit employers by reducing turnover rates, saving them the costs of hiring and training new employees and allowing them to retain skilled, committed workers.

For these reasons, **we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 496.**

Christianne Marguerite  
Director of Communications  
Progressive Maryland