

Date of Hearing: 2/15/2022

Debra Band

Potomac MD, 20854

**TESTIMONY ON HB0496 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment**

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

**FROM:** Debra Band

I'm Debra Band, and I live in Potomac, District 6. I'm passionately interested in the Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment Act.. **I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0496.**

I have long family experience with this issue, in Maryland and other states. As a young mother in other historically liberal states during the 80s, no paid family leave was available to me, and my late first husband and I struggled to give our children a secure and loving start in life while maintaining our nascent careers and financial stability. Later, I became a self-employed artist, and I can tell you that during the 7.5 years of my first husband's battle with cancer I could never commit to being anywhere at any prescribed time of day or night—I HAD to be available for the essential home care he often needed, especially his final two weeks in home hospice. If I had been dependent upon a regular job, without paid leave, my family would have been crushed. It was only because of the flexibility that my artwork commissions afforded me that I could more or less keep up with my work while caring for him.

In contrast, my younger son and his wife, in DC, just had a baby, and between the family leave benefits offered by DC, and their employers—Federal government and an NGO—they have been able to work together to give their baby son a loving and healthy welcome to life. DC and their employers understand that paid family leave is essential for families, and vital to the health of our whole labor economy, and so must Maryland. Indeed, I have a graduate degree (MIT) and experience in policy studies, and have always preferred to approach policy decisions first from a pragmatic stance rather than from Judaism's humanitarian values alone. In our present labor economy, we need to be doing everything we can to enable parents and caretakers to retain their jobs in the face of inescapable family demands. Indeed, state action is imperative for this and other important social issues when federal initiatives are paralyzed by malignant political divisions. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0496.**

In gratitude for your work,  
Debra Band