

**MHILA**  
Maryland Hotel  
Lodging Association

**HB 8 – Oppose**  
**Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment**  
**Economic Matters Committee**  
**February 15, 2022**

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and Honorable Members of the Committee:

As the sole statewide trade association dedicated to advocacy for Maryland's lodging industry, with 75,000+ hotel rooms and 34,000 direct employees (pre-pandemic), we urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 8.

HB8 would seek to establish a Family & Medical Leave Insurance Program which would be funded by a payroll tax applied to both the employee and employer.

While the establishment of such a fund is well intended, we are concerned by the cost and administrative burden it would place on employers at a volatile time for hotels struggling in an uneven recovery from COVID-19. All hotels will continue to struggle with staffing shortages, reducing their ability to maximize revenue from potential travelers. Inflationary pressure means that though a nominal recovery may occur earlier, true adjusted recovery for the industry will not take place until 2025, according to STR and Tourism Economics.

This legislation presents an additional layer of trepidation for hotels in recovery since it would create *additional* staffing shortages to cover additional leave, where the only solution would be to overwork remaining employees at an exorbitant overtime expense. We fear the very real unintended consequences of negative/low employee morale and challenges with employee retention as our already "thin" staffs would be required to cover shifts for those on leave.

For the reasons expressed in this letter, we oppose HB8 and request an unfavorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Rohrer, CAE  
President & CEO