



## **TESTIMONY ON HB 496 - SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

### **Commission on the Establishment of a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**March 29, 2022**

Submitted by Myles Hicks, Manager of the Time to Care Coalition

*The Time to Care Coalition is a statewide coalition of almost 2,000 organizations and individuals - including non-profits, faith communities, unions, and businesses - that has been working since 2016 to establish a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program in Maryland.*

**The Time to Care Coalition supports - with amendments - HB 496**, which would establish a Commission on the Establishment of a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program to study and make recommendations for establishing a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program in the State. The Time to Care Coalition supports amendments that would strike the Commission and put HB 496 in the same posture as SB 275, which has already passed the Senate.

**The Time to Care Coalition supports a Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program that follows our five key principles:** a program must be cost-effective for workers, employers, and the government; cover all working people and apply equally to all working people; reflect an inclusive definition of family and include the well-established reasons people need paid family and medical leave; provide up to 12 weeks of leave and replace a substantial share of workers' usual wages; and protect workers against adverse consequences for taking leave.

**As passed by the House, HB 496 creates a commission, not the PFML program that Marylanders need.** The proposed commission to study how to establish a paid family and medical leave program is unnecessary and would be the fourth study in ten years. Notably, the Task Force to Study Paid Family and Medical Leave was created in 2016 and issued a report in December of 2017, addressing most of the issues outlined in HB 496. Marylanders need a PFML program that provides a safety net for workers and their families now. More time to study PFML is redundant; therefore, we strongly support using this legislative session to establish a strong paid family and medical leave program in Maryland.

**The Time to Care Coalition supports amending HB 496 to the same posture that SB 275 passed the Senate, thereby creating a PFML program instead of a study or commission.** No one should have to choose between treating a serious health condition, caring for a family member, and meeting their basic needs. The Time to Care Coalition believes that this is the year for the General Assembly to pass a strong paid family and medical leave program. Thank you for your consideration.

*For a full list of member organizations, visit: [timetocare.net](http://timetocare.net)*