



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

February 15, 2022

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Opposition of HB 496 - Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony opposing HB 496. This bill establishes the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program in the Maryland Department of Labor to provide benefits to individuals who take sick leave from employment. The bill establishes the Division of Family and Medical Leave Insurance in the Department to administer the Program and establishes the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund. Both the employer and employee would pay into the fund. All size businesses would be included, and this would include self-employed businesses. There are no agriculture exemptions in the bill.

MDFB Policy: We oppose mandated health insurance. We encourage Maryland to extend tax benefits to long-term care insurance.

MDFB Would remove opposition to the bill if the program were to be voluntary or an agriculture exemption be added. Here is amendment language for an Ag exemption:

This is the existing Ag exemption language in the current law found in the Labor and Employment Article as 3-1301 (e)(4) - "Employee" does not include an individual who: is employed in the agricultural sector on an agricultural operation under § 5-403(a) of the Courts Article;

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU RESPECTFULLY OPPOSES HB 496

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396