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Finance Committee

Joint Committees

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and State Personnel Oversight

Management of Public Funds

Protocol



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Joanne C. Benson
SB 530: Maryland Fair Scheduling Act

Good Afternoon Chair Kelly, Vice Chair Feldman and members of the Finance Committee. I am here to present SB530 The Fair Scheduling Act.

This legislation which is crucial to so many in our state, addresses growing concerns, and indeed a growing crisis among working families. American workers increasingly need to balance employment with other responsibilities, but to what extent does the workplace accommodate these needs? The non-work responsibilities of the typical American worker have changed dramatically over the past 50 years mainly as a result of the entrance of women to the workforce in large numbers. As a result, the fraction of households where all of the parents work full-time has nearly doubled, and the percentage of full-time workers who are parents in full-time working families has increased substantially. Because their parents are living longer, an increasing number of workers also find that they must make time for elder care.

This bill's purpose is to require employers who employ individuals in a food service facility or retail establishment to pay certain employees at a certain rate of pay for certain shifts of work except under certain circumstances. This bill helps the working Marylander not to become inconvenienced by short-term notices by their employer regarding scheduling. By allowing employers to freely and unwarrantedly manipulate employees' schedules you disadvantage the employee who may have a certain route to get to work which takes a specific amount of money and time. This is why it is important to grant compensation for the worker when they are asked to come into work unexpectedly to cover for any inconveniences the scheduling has caused. We as senators of this great state of Maryland have a time when we arrive at work that is set in stone for the majority of our time serving. Retail workers and food service workers should be held to that same standard.

When these unpredictable schedules are put in place it makes it difficult for women to meet their job and caregiving responsibilities. Furthermore, these practices are especially harmful to single mothers. The collateral damage of this is we then have children, mainly the eldest sibling, if a part of a larger household, who then becomes the secondary caretaker of their younger sibling while the parent is out fulfilling a role that was inconveniently placed upon them. The child's responsibility thus increases and a multitude of other things can begin to occur.

Such as poor grades in school due to home life and increased stress. Mothers are bringing home more family income than ever before. So they are essential in making sure a family's structure is kept by making sure child care is taken care of, housing, transportation, and a host of other indispensable responsibilities. Additionally, when hourly workers have workplace flexibility, productivity increases and absenteeism decreases. Productivity, retention, and reduced costs are important metrics for all businesses. While some benefits of fair scheduling practices (such as manager well-being, employee health, and retaining workers in whom a business has invested training) don't immediately show up in a traditional business case, they ultimately boost the bottom line. The new era of workers and families will not stand for this which is why we have current events such as the "Great Resignation" in which employees have been resigning from their jobs in the masses just recently reaching record numbers in April of 2021. Long-standing dissatisfaction is one of the primary causes of this movement. Therefore, we must provide workplace flexibility and paid leave to strengthen our families, businesses, and economy.

Thus, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 530.