



TO: The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair
Members, House Economic Matters Committee
The Honorable Lily Qi

FROM: Loretta I. Hoepfner, MSOD, Executive Director

DATE: March 7, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** – House Bill 988 – *Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Modifications*

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support with amendment** for House Bill 988.

MDAAP supports House Bill 988, which modifies the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program by specifying various aspects of programmatic implementation, administration, and the cost-sharing split. The sponsor amendments make the cost-sharing split 50-50 between employers and employees, putting House Bill 988 in the same posture as the House Bill.

Passing the Time to Care Act of 2022 last legislative session was a historic victory for all Marylanders – and it was just the first step in realizing Paid Family and Medical Leave in Maryland. The critical work to create and implement an accessible, equitable, and robust FAMLI program is the next major step in fulfilling the promise of the Time to Care Act of 2022, and the General Assembly still has a key role to play in this collective effort. Passing House Bill 988 with the sponsor amendments will set the contribution rate for the program with a cost-sharing split of 50% employees, 50% employers. This is fundamentally important, as it keeps the program affordable and equitable for both employers and employees in Maryland. Maryland passed one of the strongest and most comprehensive FAMLI programs in the country, and this sponsor amendment to create a 50/50 cost-sharing split is important to ensure our program addresses the needs of both employees and employers, continuing to set the bar as a national model.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has been at the forefront for advocating for FAMLI programs at the national and state level. Paid maternity and parental leave has multiple proven health benefits for both parents and infants, including improved financial status, improved maternal mental health, decreased intimate partner violence, decreased infant mortality, increased infant vaccination compliance, decreased risk of rehospitalization for both mothers and infants, improved parental-infant attachment, and increased initiation and duration of breastfeeding¹. FAMLI programs provide an equitable opportunity to support working parents which will ultimately lead to reductions in health care costs, increased employee retention, and pay equity.

¹ Kelsey A. Miller, Lois K. Lee; Advocating for Physician Paid Parental Leave. *Pediatrics* July 2022; 150 (1): e2022056338. 10.1542/peds.2022-056338