

HB 988\_ Jo Shifrin\_ FAV  
Date of Hearing: March 7, 2023  
Jo Shifrin  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

**TESTIMONY ON HB0988 POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications**

**TO:** Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

**FROM:** Jo Shifrin

**My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB988, Family Leave and Medical Insurance Program - Modifications.**

I care deeply about the implementation of this Act. Judaism teaches us to value life and health, to honor our parents, and to care for children. It also calls for fair treatment of workers, including the commandment in Deuteronomy 24:14 to “not oppress the hired laborer who is poor and needy.”

The lack of paid family and medical leave affected me personally. In the 1990s, it became clear that my mother-in-law –who was 86, frail, and diabetic– could no longer manage living alone. We found a home to accommodate all of us and moved in, but shortly after, my mother-in-law’s health declined further. Without paid family and medical leave, I could not care for her and keep my full time job. 15 years later, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and chemotherapy rendered me virtually unable to work for several months. In both these instances, paid family and medical leave would have lessened the psychological and financial burdens that my family had.

The Time to Care Act must be clarified so that its implementation is equitable, fair, and just:

- Removing language that requires employees to use up all of their employer-paid leave before accessing the Time to Care benefits. This is a hardship for employees and for business owners and should be changed.
- Requiring the State to cover contributions for workers earning less than \$15 an hour.
- Extending the implementation deadline to give the Department of Labor more time to develop regulations and procure technology to run the program.

This proposed legislation would create a stronger program that would attract businesses, generate savings to other tax-funded programs (e.g., SNAP), and improve the health of Maryland’s children.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 988 and to resist any weakening amendments.**