



HB 988 - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications

House Economic Matters Committee

March 7th, 2023

SUPPORT

Chairman Wilson, Vice-Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 988. This bill modifies the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program by specifying various aspects of programmatic implementation, administration, and the cost-sharing split. **CASH strongly supports the sponsor amendments, which make the cost-sharing split 50-50 between employers and employees, putting HB 988 in the same posture as the House Bill.**

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

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 HB 988 with the sponsor amendments will set important parameters for the FAMLI program, putting the program firmly on the path toward successful implementation.

HB 988 - with sponsor amendments - sets 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. A 50/50 cost-sharing split is in line with most other states - including our neighboring state of Delaware - that have recently passed FAMLI programs. 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 of the utmost importance to ensure our program centers the needs of both employees and employers, continuing to set the bar as a national model.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for HB 988.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope