

March 7, 2023
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TESTIMONY ON HB988 - FAVORABLE
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM - MODIFICATIONS

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

FROM: David M. Friedman

My name is David Friedman and I am a resident of District 14, in Silver Spring. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB988, Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications.

I am an active member of Oseh Shalom, a Reconstructionist Jewish congregation, located in Laurel, MD. The commandment to honor your parents helps lay the groundwork in Judaism for the principle that family comes first and my own experience has demonstrated that Jewish life is organized as much around family and the home as around the synagogue. During my career as a Federal employee, I was fortunate to have adequate paid leave available to me when family members faced medical challenges. When my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer 18 years ago, I was able to spend cherished time with her in Florida every month during the 9 months leading up to her death. I cannot imagine what I would have lost if I had not been able to do that without paid leave and supportive managers and strongly believe that passing the Time to Care Act of 2022 was a historic victory for all Marylanders.

Yet, passage of the Act was just the first step in creating a successful FMLI program in Maryland - the General Assembly still has a key role to play in the collective effort to implement an accessible, equitable, and robust program. Among HB988's modifications, I want to highlight the setting of the FMLI contribution with a cost-sharing split of 50% employees, 50% employers. This is fundamentally important as it keeps the program affordable and equitable for employers and employees in Maryland and is in line with most other states - including our neighbor Delaware - that have recently passed FMLI programs.¹ I believe that Maryland passed one of the strongest and most comprehensive FMLI programs in the country and that HB988 will set Maryland on the path to successful implementation including creating a 50/50 sharing split that will ensure our program centers the needs of both employees and employers, continuing to set the bar as a national model.

I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB988 and resist any weakening amendments.

¹ A Better Balance, 2023. Comparative Chart of Paid Family and Leave Laws in the US.
<https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/paid-family-leave-laws-chart/>