

TESTIMONY ON HB 988

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM - MODIFICATIONS

House Economic Matters Committee

March 7, 2023

SUPPORT

Submitted by: **Dr. Sally Pinkstaff**

I, Dr. Sally Pinkstaff, strongly support HB 988, which modifies the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program by specifying various aspects of implementation, administration, and the 50/50 cost-sharing split.

Passing the Time to Care Act of 2022 during the last legislative session was a historic victory for all Marylanders and the first step in realizing Paid Family and Medical Leave in Maryland. The need 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. In 2023, the General Assembly still has a key role to play. Passing HB 988 will set important parameters for the FAMLI program, putting the program on the path toward successful implementation.

As a physician, I know how vital paid medical leave is for my patients and their loved ones. Financial support during this time of healing and recovery after an illness or injury is extremely important and allows people to support their basic day to day costs of living. These benefits know no boundaries and extend to people of all ages, from newborn babies and their parents to elderly loved ones. When patients have adequate time to heal without losing their job or income, they are less likely to get reinjured or sick again, thus reducing costs for themselves and the health care system. Everyone benefits which is why equitable funding is so consequential.

HB 988 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 the state of Delaware which recently passed FAMLI programs.¹ Maryland has passed one of the most comprehensive FAMLI programs in the country. Establishing a 50/50 cost-sharing split will ensure that the program meets the needs of employees and employers. Why not set the bar as a national model?

Ensuring that FAMLI is equitably and appropriately funded in Maryland will help reduce infant mortality rates, improve family well-being, and allow working people with serious health issues to recover over time and return to the workplace. This bill also allows Marylanders of all backgrounds to heal, thus resulting in stronger communities.

Dr. Sally Pinkstaff appreciates your consideration and strongly urges a favorable report on HB 988.

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