



Date of Hearing: March 7, 2023

Betsy Singer, Columbia, MD 21044, 443-812-2525

Laura Salganik, Columbia, MD 21044, 301-221-5143

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: Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Howard County,
Betsy Singer and Laura Salganik, Co-chairs

The JCRC is submitting this testimony in support of HB0988, Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications.

The JCRC represents the Jewish community of Howard County which numbers approximately 25,000 people. As Jews, we know that preserving life and health is paramount above all else.

Our sacred texts implore employers to do right by their employees. The Jewish sage Hillel taught that we can't separate ourselves from our community; we all have a responsibility for each other's wellbeing. This bill will allow working people to stay healthy. Paid family and medical leave benefits everyone and is an issue that 88% of Marylanders support.

Last session, you passed the Time to Care Act, establishing the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program, which will allow 2.5 million Maryland workers to take paid time off when needed. However, without strengthening legislation, the program could be implemented inequitably, risking unfair contribution rates and potentially harming employees earning less than \$15 per hour. Strengthening legislation includes removing the requirement for workers to exhaust all their employer-provided leave before using the FAMLI Program, which will benefit not only employees, but also their employers; codifying a 50/50 split in contribution from employers and employees; covering the costs for Medicaid providers and employees earning less than \$15 per hour; strengthening reporting requirements; and preventing any efforts to weaken the program.

Bills such as this have been effective in many other states and provide an enormously important benefit at a minimal cost to the state, and a very small cost that is shared by employers and

workers. By creating a cost-effective insurance program across all businesses in Maryland, everyone can benefit.

We respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB0988 *and resist any weakening amendments.*