

HB988\_LindaBergofsky\_FAV  
March 7, 2023

Linda R. Bergofsky  
Poolesville, MD

**TESTIMONY ON HB988 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications**

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

**FROM:** Linda R. Bergofsky

My name is Linda Bergofsky. I am a resident of District 15. I am submitting this testimony in support for HB988, Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Modifications.

I live in Poolesville, where I work part time as a substitute teacher. I'm also a member of Oseh Shalom in Laurel, MD. Last session, I was one of thousands of Marylanders who advocated for the passage of the Time to Care Act. Our synagogue also signed on as an employer supporter. Passage of the Time to Care Act was a great win for Maryland's low wage workers. But, as you well know, the devil is in the details when it comes to implementation. With any amendments that weaken this legislation, the FMLI program could be implemented inequitably, risking unfair contribution rates and potentially harming employees earning less than \$15 per hour.

Our oldest grandson is a senior at UMBC and works three jobs in addition to attending school. Those three jobs are the equivalent of a full-time job but none offer paid time off. Recently, he had back surgery and was not able to work for more than a month as he recovered. Paid Family and Medical Leave was designed for my grandson—theoretically. I would hate to see him left behind because of fixable legislative language.

As written, this bill clarifies certain provisions in the original legislation. In particular, HB988 sets the contribution rate for the program with a cost-sharing split of 50% employees, 50% employers. In addition, HB988 removes the requirement for workers to exhaust all their employer-provided leave before using the FMLI Program, which will benefit not only employees, but also their employers; covers the costs for Medicaid providers and employees earning less than \$15 per hour; strengthens reporting requirements; and prevents any efforts to weaken the program. Advocates like me are pushing for this clarifying legislation to ensure that the program is implemented in the strongest form possible so that all workers have equitable access to the program.

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