

TESTIMONY ON HB 988 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM - MOD- IFICATIONS

House Economic Matters Committee

March 7, 2023

SUPPORT

NORTHEAST CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

The Northeast Catholic Community representing eight Catholic Churches in northeast Baltimore **strongly supports HB 988**, which modifies the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Program by specifying various aspects of programmatic implementation, administration, and the cost-sharing split.

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 will set important parameters for the FAMLI program, putting the program firmly on the path toward successful implementation.

As members of the Catholic Church, we are committed to supporting legislation that lifts up the people of God, our neighbors, in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel and the Roman Catholic Church in Baltimore and throughout Maryland.

In particular, 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 our neighboring state of Delaware - that have recently passed FAMLl programs. Maryland passed one of the strongest and most comprehensive FAMLl programs in the country, and establishing 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.

As we have learned from research studies, *“Black and Latino workers are far more likely to forgo needed time off when they lack paid leave and take on more debt if they do take leave. FAMLl programs advance racial equity and build economic security for workers of color, which benefits all Maryland businesses and communities.”* Funding of this bill with a cost-sharing split of 50/50 employers and employees, is a matter of equity but also makes good business sense for Maryland employers too. **We want our representatives to hold firm on an equitable 50/50 cost-sharing split.**

The Northeast Catholic Community appreciates your consideration and strongly urges a favorable report on HB 988.