



TESTIMONY ON HB 571 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM - MODIFICATIONS

House Economic Matters Committee

February 14, 2024

Submitted by Lisa Klingenmaier, Manager of the Time to Care Coalition

The Time to Care Coalition is a statewide coalition of nearly 2,000 organizations and individuals - including non-profits, faith communities, unions, and businesses - that has been working since 2016 to establish a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program in Maryland.

The Time to Care Coalition supports HB 571, which modifies the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program by specifying various aspects of programmatic implementation, including the administration and enforcement of the Time to Care Law.

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 implement and administer an accessible, equitable, and robust FAMLI program is the next major step in fulfilling the promise of the Time to Care Act of 2022. We are excited by the work of the new FAMLI division at the Department of Labor, and we believe passing HB 571 establishes important administrative parameters for the Department that will set the program firmly on the path toward successful implementation.

The Time to Care Coalition has championed a FAMLI program that follows our five key principals:

- A program must be cost-effective for workers, employers, and the government;
- Cover all working people and apply equally to all working people;
- Reflect an inclusive definition of family and include the well-established reasons people need paid family and medical leave;
- Provide up to 12 weeks of leave and replace a substantial share of workers' usual wages; and
- Protect workers against adverse consequences for taking leave.

Notably, HB 571 requests a delay of the implementation timeline, moving contributions to July 1, 2025 and benefits to July 1, 2026. The Time to Care Coalition is eager for Marylanders to have access to paid leave that the FAMLI program will provide as soon as possible and we also want the program to be robustly accessible and functional. We understand the Department of Labor needs the additional time to build the systems necessary to accept contributions, claims, and pay out benefits, and thus the Coalition supports the delay proposed in HB 571.

The Time to Care Coalition appreciates your consideration and supports HB 571.

For a full list of member organizations visit: timetocare.net