



**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 109
State Employees – Parental Bereavement Leave**

**Senate Finance Committee
February 1, 2024**

Maryland Rise supports SB 109, which allows state employees to use up to ten days of bereavement leave if they experience the death of a child or if the employee experiences a stillbirth. The leave would be separate from all other forms of leave that the employee has access to, and the employer cannot require the employee to use other forms of paid leave in lieu of parental bereavement leave.

A parent losing a child is a profoundly traumatic event, and state employees who experience this type of unimaginable loss should have access to paid time off to grieve and process. SB 109 allows parents two full weeks of paid leave, time that is vitally important for planning funeral events, getting in touch with family members, putting affairs in order, and starting their own grieving process. While no amount of leave would ever be truly healing, a parental bereavement program provides a small but important way for Maryland to lessen the burden on state employees experiencing a traumatic loss.

Paid leave polices – like bereavement leave – provide time for employees to care for themselves while they are experiencing life events that interfere with their ability to be fully engaged at work. Allowing time for state employees to mourn and process deep loss is not only good policy for employees, but also for employers. If state employees have access to parental bereavement leave, they can return to their civil servant positions with more focus and presence than they would without time off. As one of the lead organizations who advocated for the passage of the now Time to Care law, we know every Marylander deserves time to care for themselves and their loved ones, and increasing access to bereavement leave is an important investment the state of Maryland should make in its employees.

Maryland Rise appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 109.

Submitted by: Lisa Klingenmaier, Executive Director

Maryland Rise works to promote economic opportunity for all Marylanders.