



Testimony - SB 523, State Employees - Cancer Screening - Paid Leave
Favorable
House Appropriations Committee
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Honorable Chairman Barnes and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

SEIU Local 500 as one of the largest public sector labor unions representing over 23,000 workers in Maryland stand in solidarity with our union brothers and sisters among the state workforce and wish to express our strong support of Senate Bill 523, which seeks to provide paid leave for state employees to undergo cancer screenings. This bill is a critical step toward promoting preventive healthcare and ensuring that state employees have access to life-saving screenings without the burden of financial or scheduling constraints.

Cancer remains one of the leading causes of death in the United States, yet early detection significantly improves survival rates. Many employees delay or forgo screenings due to work obligations or concerns about using limited leave time. SB 523 addresses this barrier by allowing up to four hours of paid leave annually for cancer screenings, encouraging early detection and potentially reducing long-term healthcare costs for both employees and the state.

By extending this benefit to all state employees, including temporary and part-time workers, SB 523 promotes equitable access to healthcare. It also sets a strong precedent for other employers to prioritize preventive health measures. The bill's requirement for clear regulations ensures that the leave process is well-structured and effectively implemented.

Investing in preventive care is not just a matter of public health but also of fiscal responsibility. Early detection reduces the need for costly treatments and extended medical leave, benefiting both employees and the efficiency of state government operations.

We respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 523 and thank Senator Charles for leading on this important issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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SEIU Local 500