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WOMEN LEGISLATORS OF MARYLAND
THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February 5, 2025

To: Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
Delegate Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair
Appropriations Committee

The Maryland Women's Caucus is proud to express our strong support for **HB520: *Maryland Workforce Recruitment, Retention, and Re-entry Act***. This critical legislation is a necessary step toward addressing the challenges women face in the workforce and ensuring that Maryland's state government is adapting to meet the needs of today's labor force.

Women—particularly those between the ages of 25 and 34—continue to face significant barriers to workforce participation, with caregiving responsibilities being one of the primary obstacles. In 2021, 18% of women in this age group in Maryland were out of the labor force, often due to the demands of child and elder care. The impact of these career interruptions is long-term, affecting retirement security, career advancement, and economic stability. HB520 offers a practical and innovative solution by requiring state agencies to assess whether vacant positions in executive agencies could be structured as job-share opportunities.

By encouraging agencies to consider job-sharing as an option, this bill expands employment opportunities for women who may not be able to commit to full-time roles due to caregiving obligations. At the same time, it provides agencies with a tool to address workforce shortages and attract highly skilled candidates who might otherwise be excluded from state employment due to rigid full-time work requirements. The legislation does not mandate hiring part-time employees but ensures that state agencies are actively considering flexible work arrangements that better align with the realities of today's workforce.

Investing in policies that support women's workforce participation is essential to Maryland's economic growth and stability. HB520 takes a thoughtful and proactive approach to improving labor force participation, addressing state agency vacancies, and fostering an inclusive economy that recognizes and supports the contributions of working women.

For these reasons, the Maryland Women's Caucus strongly urges the Appropriations Committee to issue a favorable report for HB520. Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to advancing economic opportunities for all Marylanders.