

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of SB 355 “Family and Medical Leave  
Insurance Program – Delay of Implementation”**  
Senate Finance Committee  
February 05, 2025

**UNFAVORABLE**

**TO:** Chair Beidle Kelley, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Finance Committee

**FROM:** John H. Bowers

My name is John Bowers. I am submitting this testimony in OPPOSITION of SB 355, which would again delay implementation of the FAML I program, leaving Marylanders without paid medical and family leave benefits for an additional two years.

I am a resident of Montgomery County, a District 14 constituent, and a volunteer Alzheimer’s advocate. I am fortunate to be represented in the Maryland State Senate by Sen. Craig Zucker (D).

Alzheimer’s is a devastating disease that eventually kills. I know this first hand because I lost my mother to Alzheimer’s disease. Alzheimer’s affects entire families, not just those that have the disease. And care is expensive! Families may cut back on food, transportation, and medical care to pay for it, or borrow money, or use retirement savings. In Maryland, 1 in 5 unpaid caregivers are providing care for a person with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia.

Paying for these costs is often made even more difficult by the employment consequences for caregivers. In the US, among those who continue to work, 57% of Alzheimer’s caregivers have had to go to work late, leave early, or take time off because of their caregiving responsibilities. And this: More than 1 in 3 dementia caregivers say their health has gotten worse due to their care responsibilities. These caregivers need paid family leave.

The Alzheimer’s Association Maryland Chapter stands with the Time to Care Coalition in full support of timely implementation of FAML I. We provide help, answers and referral to those affected by Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, even as the General Assembly has reduced, by 50%, the funding passed for the Department of Health to expand and improve dementia and brain health services in Maryland.

A third delay in implementing FAML I will harm hundreds of thousands of Maryland families, caregivers, and service members going through a medical crisis. I respectfully urge this committee to return a UNFAVORABLE report on SB 355.

Thank you,

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