



Senate Bill 652

Local Government – Local Personnel – Leave With Pay

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Finance Committee

Date: February 20, 2025

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 652 WITH AMENDMENTS** because it provides counties with flexibility to grant disaster service leave to employees while ensuring that local governments retain discretion over its implementation.

SB 652 applies to county and municipal employees and would allow an eligible employee to receive up to 15 days of paid disaster service leave if they are:

- certified by the Red Cross as a disaster service volunteer and deployed to a disaster of Level 2 or above at the Red Cross's request; or
- a member of an emergency response organization, such as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, Civil Air Patrol, or a volunteer fire department.

Counties appreciate the bill's intent to provide a pathway for local government employees to engage in critical disaster response efforts without imposing an undue mandate on county operations. MACo worked with the sponsor on clarifying amendments to ensure the bill allows counties to decide whether to grant this leave rather than mandating it.

To maintain flexibility, MACo suggests clarifying language to confirm that counties and municipalities have discretion in granting this leave rather than being required to do so. MACo believes this was the sponsor's original intent with the bill.

With these amendments, SB 652 presents a reasonable option for counties that can provide this support for their employees' disaster response efforts while balancing operational needs. MACo urges the Committee to adopt amendments reflecting this intent and issue a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 652.