



Senate Bill 58

Labor and Employment - Parental School Engagement Leave Act

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Finance Committee

Date: January 29, 2025

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 58. This bill would mandate local governments, as public employers, to provide 12 hours of paid parental school engagement leave annually, separate from any existing leave policies. Encouraging parental involvement in education is undoubtedly important; however, this bill imposes unnecessary fiscal and administrative burdens on county governments, which already provide generous leave options.

Counties consistently demonstrate their commitment to supporting employees through robust leave benefits. Many counties already allow employees to use accrued leave for purposes such as attending school events. Mandating an additional leave category would strain county budgets and operations. Allegany County estimates the cost of implementing this requirement at approximately \$184,137 annually. St. Mary's County anticipates an annual expense of \$403,200 for 1,200 eligible employees. These are consequential – and unnecessary – costs for employers who already provide generous leave policies and are already struggling with strained budgets.

Moreover, counties are still grappling with the pending implementation of FAMILI or the Time to Care Act. The evolving regulations, which were initially expected in December, have delayed counties' ability to finalize compliance strategies. Introducing yet another leave mandate at this critical juncture would only compound the administrative burden, leaving local governments with inadequate time and resources to adapt. The cumulative effect of this bill's requirements undermines counties' flexibility to manage their workforce effectively.

Counties recognize the intent of SB 58 but ask the Committee to consider the broader implications of this proposal and its unintended consequences on local governments' financial stability and operational efficiency. For these reasons, MACo requests an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 58.