



Empowering People to Lead Systemic Change

1500 Union Ave., Suite 2000, Baltimore, MD 21211

Phone: 410-727-6352 | Fax: 410-727-6389

DisabilityRightsMD.org

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL 58: LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT—PARENTAL SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT LEAVE ACT

DATE: January 29, 2025

POSITION: SUPPORT

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the Protection and Advocacy agency for Maryland. Part of a national network of similar organizations, DRM is federally mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM strongly support Senate Bill 58, which would require *employers to provide at least 12 hours of paid parental engagement leave each school year to employees*. This bill would make a tremendous difference for parents of children with disabilities by enabling them to more easily attend their children's Individualized Education Program (IEP) and other special education-related meetings. As noted in the testimony of the Education Advocacy Coalition (EAC) in support of Senate Bill 58, these meetings must be held at a time and place convenient for parents and school staff. However, the meetings occur during school hours, and parents must use precious leave time hours or, if they are called to frequent meetings for their child or do not have leave time, risk losing their jobs in order to attend these meetings. DRM has represented many children whose parents give up their lunch hours or break time in order to attend IEP meetings for their children. Recently, we have attended IEP meetings that have had to end earlier than planned because the parent, who was logging in remotely to the meeting during his break time, was being ordered by his employer to return to work. When parents have such time constrictions, additional meetings need to be held; the child's ability to obtain appropriate educational and related services and an appropriate placement can be delayed as a result.

Senate Bill 58 would go a long way towards addressing this problem by enabling parents of children with disabilities to receive paid leave to participate more effectively in the special education process.

Please contact Leslie Seid Margolis at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org or 443-692-2505 with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Logan Ewing
Staff Attorney

Leslie Seid Margolis
Managing Attorney and Policy Counsel