



January 29, 2025

Legislative Position: Unfavorable

Senate Bill 58

Labor and Employment - Parental School Engagement Leave Act

Senate Finance Committee

Dear Chairwoman Beidle and members of the committee:

Founded in 1969, the Howard Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to helping businesses—from sole proprietors to large international firms—grow and succeed. With the power of 700 members that encompass more than 170,000 employees, the Howard County Chamber is an effective partner with elected officials and advocates for the interests of the county's business community.

As introduced, Senate Bill 58 (SB 58) would require employers to provide additional paid leave to employees for parental engagement purposes. SB 58 would create additional costs and burden on Maryland's employers by layering another paid leave program on top of what the state already requires. SB 58 creates another challenge to the Governor's economic growth agenda to spur Maryland's economy.

As Maryland struggles to incentivize the creation of new businesses, retain existing businesses, and create economic opportunities for the State's residents, SB 58 stands to create another cost hurdle to achieving that end. Since 2019, Maryland has had the 5th fewest new business applications of any state, and as a direct result of that poor economic growth, Maryland ranked 44th in job growth in 2024. As such, Maryland must take action to grow the State's economy.

Maryland currently requires employers to provide sick and safe leave, jury and witness duty leave, and voting leave in addition to leave regarding organ and bone marrow donation, volunteering, and parental bonding. In 2022, Maryland enacted the Time to Care Act, which established the paid family and medical leave insurance (FAMLI) law that has yet to be fully implemented by the Maryland Department of Labor. At minimum, Maryland should wait to determine the full impact that the FAMLI law has on both employers and employees before enacting additional leave requirements.

Maryland must promote economic expansion and avoid placing additional burdens on employers. **We respectfully request an unfavorable report on SB 58.**

Sincerely,

Kristi Simon

President & CEO

Howard County Chamber of Commerce