



TESTIMONY ON SB 225 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM – APPLICATION YEAR AND PARTICIPATION OF SELF-EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

Senate Finance Committee

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Submitted by Lisa Klingenmaier, Manager of the Time to Care Coalition

The Time to Care Coalition is a statewide coalition of nearly 2,000 organizations and individuals - including non-profits, faith communities, unions, and businesses - working since 2016 to establish a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program in Maryland.

The Time to Care Coalition supports SB 225, which requires the Maryland Department of Labor (DOL) to draft and adopt regulations to establish an optional self-employed enrollment program in the state's Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program, and specifies that an application year for FAMLI program is established when a period of leave under FAMLI begins.

The Time to Care Coalition has championed a FAMLI program that follows our five key principles:

- Be cost-effective for workers, employers, and the government;
- Cover all working people and apply equally to all working people;
- Reflect an inclusive definition of family and include the well-established reasons people need paid family and medical leave;
- Provide up to 12 weeks of leave and replace a substantial share of workers' usual wages; and
- Protect workers against adverse consequences for taking leave.

Passing the Time to Care Act in 2022 was a historic victory for all Marylanders - and it was just the first step in realizing Paid Family and Medical Leave in Maryland. The critical work to implement and administer an accessible, equitable, and robust FAMLI program is the next major step in fulfilling the promise of the Act. We are excited by the work of the FAMLI Division at DOL, and passing SB 225 gives the Department time to adopt important regulations that will both streamline participation in the self-employed enrollment program and make the program easier for the DOL to administer.

The Time to Care Coalition represents the millions of Marylanders who have fought for access to paid leave, and we are eager to realize the full implementation of the FAMLI program, including for self-employed individuals, an important constituency that not all states with paid leave allow to opt into their programs. As the mechanics of creating the opt-in provisions for self-employed individuals requires the Department to draft additional regulations, the Coalition supports the aims of SB 225.

The Time to Care Coalition appreciates your consideration and strongly supports SB 225.

For a full list of member organizations visit: timetocare.net

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