



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 58

January 28, 2025

TO: Members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of the Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 58 – Labor and Employment - Parental School Engagement Leave Act

POSITION: OPPOSE

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **opposes** Senate Bill (SB) 58.

SB 58 mandates employers with at least 50 employees to provide 12 hours of paid Parental School Engagement Leave per school year. This leave would be designated for attending school meetings and conferences and would be separate from other existing leave benefits, paid at the employee's regular rate. Employers would also be prohibited from requiring employees to exhaust other leave before using this new entitlement.

While the bill seeks to enhance parental involvement in education, its provisions introduce significant concerns for Baltimore City as an employer. These include operational challenges, overlaps with existing leave policies, and potential fiscal impacts. Based on our review, we oppose the bill in its current form for the following reasons:

- **Lack of Time Specification:** SB 58 does not explicitly limit the use of Parental School Engagement Leave to employees whose regular shift coincides with school meeting times. This omission could lead to disruptions to work schedules and operational inefficiencies, especially for employers with flexible scheduling policies.
- **Overlap with Existing Leave Policies:** Baltimore City offers employees a robust leave package that includes 12–24 vacation days annually and four personal leave days, which may be used with as little as one day's notice. These policies already provide ample opportunity for employees to attend school-related activities without imposing additional mandated leave.
- **Workforce Disruption Risks:** Although the bill limits leave usage at four hours per instance and prohibits carryover, it lacks guidance on managing overlapping requests from employees on a single shift. This could disproportionately impact critical operations and essential services.
- **Potential Financial Impact:** The bill requires paid leave that is separate from existing leave entitlements and mandates coverage at the employee's regular rate of pay. This introduces a fiscal strain on employers, including local government entities like Baltimore City. The requirement for separate leave also complicates administrative tracking and may necessitate updates to payroll systems, increasing costs.
- **Proposed Exemption for Robust Leave Policies:** Public employers, such as Baltimore City, that already offer generous leave entitlements should be exempt from this legislation. With the current leave structure, the City of Baltimore may face a situation where additional leave may create both an operational and fiscal hardship.

The mandates of SB 58 overlap with existing policies and impose undue operational and financial burdens. We recommend that the legislation include an exemption for employers with robust leave policies and define eligibility criteria to minimize workplace disruption.

For the above reasons, the BCA respectfully requests an **unfavorable** report on SB 58.