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MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

Education, Business and
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Pensions Subcommittee

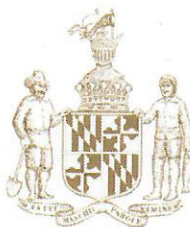
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Testimony of Senator C. Benson SB58 Labor and Employment Parental School Engagement Leave Act

Good afternoon, Chair Pamela Beidle, Vice Chair Anthony Hayes, and esteemed members of the committee,

I am Senator Joanne C. Benson, and I am here today to express my unwavering support for the Labor and Employment Parental School Engagement Leave Act. This legislation is inspired by the Parental Engagement Act of Illinois and aims to ensure that employed parents and guardians could engage in their children's education without the constraints of work conflicts.

Importance of Parental Engagement

Parental involvement is the cornerstone of a strong educational system. When parents are actively engaged in their children's education, it leads to better academic outcomes and overall student success. However, many working parents face challenges in attending important school meetings and conferences due to their work schedules. This Act seeks to address these challenges by providing parents with the necessary approved time off of 24 hours of personal to participate in their children's educational activities.

Key Provisions of the Act

The Labor and Employment Parental School Engagement Leave Act includes the following key provisions:

1. **Eligibility:** Employed parents and guardians who have worked for at least six consecutive months and meet certain criteria will be eligible for leave to attend school-related activities.
2. **Leave Entitlement:** Eligible parents will be entitled to a reasonable amount of leave during the school year to attend necessary educational or behavioral conferences at their children's schools.
3. **Employer Obligations:** Employers are required to provide this leave without penalty to the employee, ensuring that parents can participate in their children's education without fear of job loss or disciplinary action.
4. **Annual Evaluation:** The State Department of Education will hire an independent contractor to conduct an annual evaluation of the program's effectiveness, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Labor and Employment Parental School Engagement Leave Act is a vital step towards fostering stronger connections between parents and schools. By providing parents with the time, they need to engage in their children's education, we are investing in the future success of our students and the overall well-being of our communities. I urge the committee to support this important legislation by giving a favorable report.