



Testimony in opposition to SB 355

Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Delay of Implementation

Position: Unfavorable

To Senator Beidle and members of Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Ricarra Jones, and I am the Political Director with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation, with 10,000 members in Maryland and Washington, DC. 1199 SEIU opposed SB 355 because timely implementation of the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program is crucial to supporting working families across the state who currently do not have paid family and medical leave benefits.

SB 355 would delay the implementation of the bill an additional two years. This delay detrimentally impacts families experiencing medical crises and choosing between caring for themselves or a loved one and maintaining their income and paying their bills.

Maintaining the current FAML I implementation timeline benefits families, businesses, and Maryland's economy. The Urban Institute found that Maryland's FAML I program has the potential to reduce the poverty rate by 22% among families receiving benefits. The Urban Institute study also noted that FAML I will provide a \$98 million tax benefit to small businesses, leveling the playing field for small businesses to compete with large corporations and making the state an enticing place to start a business. Lack of access to the FAML I program is pushing Marylanders to leave the workforce to care for their loved ones which hinders our state's economic growth.

1199 SEIU urges an unfavorable report on SB 355 because Marylanders can no longer afford delays to the FAML I program.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones
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