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HB 724
Employment Discrimination – Caregiver Status
Hearing before the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
February 19, 2026
1:00pm

Position: FAVORABLE

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization that seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Workplace Justice Project promotes justice and equity in the workplace. We work to expand and enforce the rights of low-wage workers to receive an honest day's pay for an honest day's work in a safe, equitable workplace. **The PJC supports HB724, which would prohibit discrimination based on a worker's status as a caregiver.**

HB724 prohibits a form of discrimination the disproportionately affects women. There is no federal protection against discrimination based on caregiving status, yet many working caregivers report impacts on their job.¹ Nearly 1.2 million Marylanders are caregivers for another family member, or about 1 in 4 adults in the state. Caregivers in Maryland are predominantly female (75%), and nearly two-thirds of caregivers hold other jobs while also caregiving.² Moreover, 30% of family caregivers have a household income under \$50,000.

HB724 would bring Maryland in line with 250 other states and localities that ban discrimination based on an individual's status as a caregiver. Nine counties and cities in Maryland already protect workers from discrimination based on family status, which may include caregiving responsibilities.³ Workers outside those counties and cities currently have to rely on a hodgepodge of federal laws that may not adequately protect them from common acts of workplace discrimination, like refusing to promote someone who has children, or opting not to hire someone because they mentioned they care for elderly parents during their job interview. All

¹ John A. Hartford Foundation, *National Alliance for Caregiving: Caregiving in the US 2025 Report and Data Hub*, <https://www.johnahartford.org/resources/view/national-alliance-for-caregiving-caregiving-in-the-us-2025-report> (Nov. 13, 2025)

² National Alliance for Caregiving, *Caregiving in the US 2025: Maryland*, https://www.caregivingintheus.org/app/uploads/2025/10/caregiving-in-the-us-2025-maryland.doi_10.26419-2fppi.00383.015.pdf (Oct. 2025).

³ WorkLifeLaw, *Laws Protecting Family Caregivers at Work*, <https://worklifelaw.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Local-FRD-Law-List.pdf> (2025).

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workers deserve dignity and respect, including workplaces free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. HB724 furthers this goal for working caregivers.

For these reasons, the PJC **SUPPORTS HB724** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report. Should you have any questions, please call Nicole Tortoriello at 410-625-9409 ext. 279.