

Chair and Members of the Committee

Maryland General Assembly

RE: HB 536 – Employment Discrimination – Reasonable Accommodations – Disabilities Due to Childbirth, Menopause, and Related Medical Conditions

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Baltimore City Women’s Commission, we are writing to express our strong support for House Bill 536, which expands employment protections to include reasonable accommodations for temporary disabilities related to childbirth, menopause, and related medical conditions.

This legislation represents an important and necessary step toward advancing workplace equity and health protections for women and those assigned female at birth across Maryland. By explicitly including childbirth, menopause, and related medical conditions within existing reasonable accommodation protections, HB 536 acknowledges the full continuum of reproductive and hormonal health experiences that impact women’s ability to safely and sustainably participate in the workforce.

For many women, particularly Black and Brown women and women in low-wage or physically demanding jobs, these conditions can significantly affect their health, economic stability, and job retention. Without clear protections, workers are often forced to choose between their health and their livelihood. HB 536 helps to eliminate this impossible choice by ensuring that temporary conditions such as postpartum recovery, lactation needs, and menopause-related symptoms are treated with the same dignity and accommodation as other temporary disabilities.

We are particularly encouraged by provisions that:

- Require employers to engage in an interactive process to identify reasonable accommodations, such as modified duties, schedule adjustments, or temporary transfers;
- Clarify that related medical conditions include lactation and menopause-related symptoms, which have historically been overlooked in workplace policy; and
- Maintain a balanced approach by allowing employers to consider operational impacts when determining undue hardship.

This bill aligns with the Baltimore City Women’s Commission’s commitment to advancing gender equity, improving maternal and reproductive health outcomes, and supporting policies that strengthen women’s economic security. It also reflects a broader understanding that workplace protections must evolve to meet the real and lived experiences of today’s workforce.

By passing HB 536, Maryland has the opportunity to lead with compassion, equity, and evidence-informed policy that supports workers across the lifespan.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 536.

Sincerely,

Baltimore City Women’s Commission