

FAMILY LEAGUE

OF BALTIMORE

t 410.662.5500 f 410.662.5520
2305 N. Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, MD 21218
familyleague.org

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1: Maryland Healthy Working Families Act

TO: Chair Davis, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Jonathon Rondeau, President & CEO, Family League of Baltimore
DATE: February 10, 2017

As the Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore, Family League is charged with improving the well-being of children and families, which includes advocating for policies that benefit them. Access to paid sick leave is a vitally important economic benefit for many working families. HB 1 will require employers to provide a minimum of one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked by the employee, with the option of capping an employee's leave at 7 days (56 hours) per year, 3 months after their date of hire. The Act would protect small employers and exempt employers already offering equal or more generous earned sick time or paid time off.

Maryland is the wealthiest state in the United States yet thousands of our employees do not receive earned sick leave. According to the Institute of Women's Research, about 36 percent, or about 723,000, Maryland employees lack access to paid sick days.¹ These employees typically have jobs in natural resources, construction, maintenance and service fields.² For parents in these fields, missing work can place a strain on their household.

When employees without sick leave take time off to take care of themselves and their families, they put their jobs at risk. An average family without paid sick days would lose the equivalent of an entire month's grocery budget in just 3.5 days off work.³ Parents without paid sick days are more than twice as likely as parents with paid sick days to send a sick child to school or daycare.⁴ Additionally, employees without paid sick days are more likely to go to work sick, and more likely to delay needed medical care, leading to prolonged illness and costly emergency room visits.⁵ Earned sick days not only sustain the household but they also create safer work and learning environments.

¹ Milli, Jessica. (2015). *Valuing Good Health in Maryland: The Costs and Benefits of Earned Sick Days*. Retrieved from iwpr.org: <http://goo.gl/9AmLLC>

² *Ibid.*

³ Center for American Progress. (2012). Fact sheet: Paid Sick Days. Retrieved from americanprogress.org: <http://goo.gl/TmZyNn>

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

We appreciate the committee's consideration of this bill, which would improve the lives of many Maryland families and promote a more equitable work-life balance for employees managing many responsibilities. **Family League of Baltimore respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1.** If you have any questions, I can be reached at jrondeau@familyleague.org or 420-662-5500.

Sincerely,

Jonathon Rondeau
President & CEO
Family League of Baltimore