



Testimony Concerning HB 839
“Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance
Program - Establishment”
Submitted to the House Economic Matters Committee
February 24, 2020

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) strongly supports HB 839, which would establish a Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program through which employees could take up to 12 weeks of partially paid leave from their jobs to care for new children, other family members with serious health conditions or disabilities, or themselves.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other supports for children and their families. We have been active in state and federal debates on policies that address the needs of working families and are strongly committed to ensuring that they have the supports they need to care for their children while meeting the demands of their jobs.

For many Maryland employees, the ability to take time away from work following the birth or adoption of a child is simply unaffordable. And yet we know that benefits to children, to parents, and to society as a whole are profound. Parental leave demonstrably improves child and maternal health, and it helps address some of the most critical opportunities for child development.

Nearly 25% of women return to work after taking 10 or fewer days of parental leave, potentially putting themselves and their children at risk physically and emotionally. New mothers who take paid leave are more likely to breastfeed and less likely to suffer from maternal depression. Their children are more likely to attend their well-baby visits, to receive their immunizations, and to thrive. Fathers who take time off after the birth of a child are more likely to remain involved in the child’s life. Parents with paid leave are better able to balance work and family responsibilities, and they have greater economic security than parents without access to paid leave.

Families have to juggle many demands on their time, but none are more important than their responsibilities to their children. HB 839 gives parents time to care for their families during a critical window of child development. We urge your favorable consideration.