



**Hearing Testimony February 24, 2020
House Economic Matters Committee
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC**

HB 839 – Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment

SUPPORT

My name is Monika Roberts. As a School Administrative Secretary in Montgomery County Public Schools, I was an active member of SEIU Local 500 for thirty years, and after my retirement, in 2018, I signed on to the Retirees Council for Local 500. I'm here today to share with you some thoughts about this HB 839 The Time to Care Act from my perspective as a mother, and a senior citizen.

Four years ago, I became ill and required lifesaving surgery along with a difficult recovery period. I can testify to how important it is to be able to have your child or loved one able to take the time from work to take care of you. My daughter, Patty, was with me every step of the way. She was able to stay at home and take care of me, as well as sit at the hospital and take me back and forth to doctor appointments. She did this regardless of the financial burden or the strain it put on her family. She did this because I am her mother and that was the end of that.

In 2018, complications from the surgery three years before became another lifesaving event. By this time, I had retired and was living on a very tight retiree budget. I was concerned about copays, hospital stays, my daily cost of living. My daughter Patty was with me again. I was again as before concerned over the time I was taking her away from work, the threat to her and her family's financial state. She spent so much time driving me back and forth to doctors, sitting at hospitals and just the extreme weight of the situation we were in opened the door for worry. The freedom or ability to put the financial expense to the side and be able to be there for the family member in need is sometimes all a person can handle.

When I was first asked to speak here to you today, I was concerned about sharing my story. Would you really listen and understand what I was telling you. Thinking about my future health and the possibility of another health crisis, I find myself extremely scared. Assessing the specifics – a child who wants to take care of her mother, but the

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financial burden to do so is not only frightening but lends itself to a feeling of helplessness. What if I become so ill where I need help around the clock? How can I ask my daughter to take time from her work and put that financial burden on her to take care of me when she already has a family?

The issue is that when a family goes through a health crisis, it is not just only a crisis for the person who has the health crisis, it is also a crisis for the family who wants to provide the much-needed support and resources. It is a family crisis. This benefit would provide the support and resources at the time when the family needs it the most. Please support HB 839 and thank you for your time.

Monika Roberts
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