



The
Family
Tree

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Raising families up.

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February 27, 2020

The Honorable Delores Kelley
Chairwoman, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Support SB 539 (Time to Care Act) - Labor and Employment – Family & Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment

Dear Chairwoman Kelley & Vice Chairman Feldman,

Please make **time to care** a reality in Maryland by establishing the Family & Medical Leave Insurance Program (Time to Care Act). This would make paid leave available for Maryland workers for up to twelve weeks following the birth or adoption of a child or when needed to provide care for a family member or oneself.

Everyone needs time to care for new babies, aging parents, loved ones with health needs or disabilities, or for helping oneself. Yet, many Marylanders, including staff of The Family Tree, cannot take time to care because they lack paid family leave or the financial resources to use unpaid leave. Only 17% of U.S. workers have access to paid family leave, and fewer than 40% have paid personal leave for short term disabilities. Unpaid leave forces too many Marylanders to choose between income and family needs. This is particularly true to the vulnerable, economically disenfranchised folks we are committed to serve, as well as the forty-five staff we employ.

The Family Tree is Maryland's leading child abuse and neglect prevention organization, and the Maryland Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America. With education and family support, we help parents and the community provide sturdy foundations for every child's development. More than 23,000 people received help through our parenting classes and programs in 2019.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge a favorable vote on SB539. You will be supporting Maryland's most critical assets—our families.

Sincerely, Patricia K. Cronin, LCSW-C

Executive Director