



To: Delegate Dumais, Chair and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee
From: Venicia Gray, Associate Director, Federal & State Government Affairs
March of Dimes
Date: March 2, 2021
Re: SUPPORT – HB1326 – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act – Revisions and Public Health Emergency Leave

Dear Delegate Dumais, Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee:

The March of Dimes Inc. would like to express support for HB1326. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an impossible situation for working parents, forcing them to juggle their job responsibilities alongside childcare and homeschooling while keeping their families safe. March of Dimes is working to meet the challenges of these times and fight for women, infants, and families to remain as healthy as possible during the crisis.

This legislation would expand the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act allowing for flexibility during a public health crisis such as COVID-19. If passed, HB1326 would offer additional sick and safe leave in addition to the earned sick and safe leave under certain circumstances. This would ensure financial stability to those who need to care for an elderly or ill parent, child or themselves. This also would allow individuals to care for a sick family member, new baby or a child whose school or day care has closed due to a public health crisis.

If this pandemic has taught us anything, it's how fragile our country's support system is for our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. As we look beyond this pandemic and consider lessons learned, policymakers must enact a permanent and expansive paid family leave program. Families in every state should be free from making the agonizing decision of financial security or the health of the mother and her family. Guaranteed family leave for all who need it would eliminate that false choice and make possible the real idyll: every mom and baby safe and well at home, in the first weeks of a new life and far beyond.

It is imperative that we bolster support for struggling families - including improving emergency paid sick days and paid leave policies created by previous legislation. To close these gaps and protect the health of families during the pandemic and any other public health crisis, March of Dimes urges the House Economic Matters Committee for a favorable report on HB1326. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Venicia Gray
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