

Good Afternoon,

My name is Catherine Nwosu. I am here to speak in favor of SB0809. I live and teach in Prince George's Senate District 47. I am a veteran educator and mother of three. I want to share some personal experiences related to being pregnant but before I do that, let's talk about teacher employee benefits. While it varies by county, educators typically receive 10 paid sick days and 3 personal days a year. Leave can only be taken in half day increments. And year to year, these days can roll over if unused. In my school district you may receive 10 additional paid days of maternity leave if you deliver during the school year.

Pregnant people have a lot of doctors appointments that eat up our sick leave totaling about 10-15 appointments for normal pregnancies. Being pregnant is hard but being a pregnant educator is extra hard. You are on your feet most of the day and are going non stop on top of growing a little human. Not to mention all your sub plans for those appointments.

Now I want to discuss my most recent pregnancy/delivery. I had high blood pressure for about a month. And at 7 and a half months pregnant on a Thursday night, I was having strong Braxton Hicks contractions. I still took off and went to the doctor the following day which was a Friday. They had me come in on a Monday for follow up. I was then sent to the hospital for monitoring. That Monday a month away from delivery I was diagnosed with pre-eclampsia. The doctor described treatment as delivering the baby. I was kept at the hospital and was induced for a long 4 days until I finally had my baby.

On top of all the other appointments during pregnancy, I had taken 5 days of leave before I even had my baby in the hospital. If you include pre-natal appointments, delivery, and recovery, that is a lot of leave pregnant people use. And current benefits could easily be exhausted leaving a hefty financial toll for unpaid FMLA.

That is why I am strongly in favor of SB 0809 for paid time off after delivery and urge you to vote in favor for Pregnant educators to take the financial worries away from them during this major life changing aspect of parenthood.