



March 4, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 0539 – Labor and Employment - Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program - Establishment – **Oppose**

Dear Senator Kelley:

This bill would create a state-sponsored mandatory paid leave program, based on the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), an unpaid job and benefit protected leave law. This state law would require employers and employees to pay an unspecified premium to fund the benefit.

While the law states that it generally follows federal FMLA provisions, it is far more liberal in terms of both employee eligibility and which family members an employee cares for to be eligible to seek benefits. In addition, while FMLA covers employers of 50 or more employees, SB 0539 covers all employers, regardless of size.

Such a program may indeed be an attractive *voluntary* option for employers and employees with the financial means to pay into it, it is extraordinarily burdensome to require *all* employers and employees to fund such a benefit. The business concern here is that it requires leave to be made available to employees working far less than the 1250 hours required by the FMLA. Many employers provide leave to their employees as they are able, based on financial ability, as well as staffing and other criteria as considerations for successfully running their business. In addition, this bill states no exception to claiming benefits if the employee is already receiving benefits from an employer policy, or from an insured short-term disability plan.

As is the case with many employment/workplace related mandates, one-size-fits-all rarely fits anyone well. Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, a business advocacy organization of over 600 members, opposes this bill and therefore requests that you give it an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike McMullin'.

Mike McMullin
President
Carroll County Chamber of Commerce

CC: Senator Justin Ready
Delegate Haven Shoemaker

**Carroll County Chamber of Commerce • 9 East Main Street • Westminster, MD 21157
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