



House Bill 968

Labor and Employment – Maryland Earned Sick and Safe Leave Act

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Economic Matters Committee

Date: February 18, 2014

From: Robin Clark

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 968. This bill would require employers to provide paid sick leave at a normal rate of pay for employees and their family members. The bill expands the definition of family members beyond current uses and includes a broad array of circumstances for taking sick leave. Even though county governments generally offer generous benefits and leave policies, these mandates would be inefficient and difficult.

Counties currently provide substantially more sick leave and parental leave than the legislation prescribes for full time employees. However, they do not all provide the same benefits to part-time workers. Extending such expansive leave benefits to part-time employees would require counties to make administrative changes and incur additional costs, however the larger concern is the potential operational inefficiency.

Providing many public services depends on the attendance of those employees who work a limited schedule. County emergency services personnel and essential employees are integral to a county's ability to protect the public's safety and deliver essential services. County employers do not build in redundancy to all part-time positions to account for absences.

Absences of essential personnel can put strain on response systems, overburden other employees, and create extra overtime expenses for county governments. This legislation does not recognize emergency circumstances and creates additional opportunities for sick leave during public health emergencies - periods of time where essential employees and public safety employees are needed most.

In addition, some definitions provided in the legislation are broader than current allowances. Expanded definitions of family membership and a broad list of allowable reasons for absences exposes county employers to absences and service disruptions. These additions would present difficulties in maintaining a stable workforce, and the delivery of sometimes critically important services.

For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** HB 968 and recommends the Committee issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report.