



**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 382 - 2017:
Commonsense Paid Leave Act**

TO: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Zoe Ziliak Michel, Policy Analyst, Center for Law and Social Policy

My name is Zoe Ziliak Michel. I am a resident of Silver Spring and a policy analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). CLASP is a national organization that works to improve the lives of low income people by developing and advocating for federal, state, and local policies that strengthen families and create pathways to education and work. CLASP opposes HB 382, Governor Hogan's proposal to provide paid sick days only for Marylanders working full-time at large businesses. We urge you to reject HB 382 and instead pass HB 1, the Healthy Working Families Act.

More than 750,000 Maryland workers are currently unable to earn paid sick days. Low-wage workers are particularly hard hit: 80 percent do not have access to sick days. While HB 1 would make it possible for most of these workers to take the time they need to recover from illness, care for sick loved ones, or deal with the effects of sexual or physical abuse, HB 382 would leave hundreds of thousands of these workers without this vital labor protection.

HB 1, the Healthy Working Families Act, will provide an estimated 512,000 Maryland workers with paid sick days for the first time. In contrast, the Commonsense Paid Leave Act will give paid sick days to at most 272,000 Marylanders. There's nothing common-sense about forcing 240,000 workers to choose between taking the time they need to stay well and earning a paycheck. Governor Hogan's proposal will leave thousands of working families in the lurch.

HB 382 falls short by limiting its coverage only to employees of employers with at least 50 workers *in any one location*. While the Healthy Working Families Act allows truly small businesses—those with fewer than 15 employees *total*—to provide unpaid (but still job-protected) sick days, HB 382 would also exempt much larger businesses with hundreds of employees spread across multiple locations, forcing thousands of additional workers to fear for their livelihoods when they have the flu.

Passing a bill that excludes workers at businesses with fewer than 50 employees at any one location will put Maryland out of step with the rest of the country. Arizona, California, Massachusetts, Oregon, Vermont, Washington (state), and the District of Columbia all require earned sick days for workers at employers of *any* size. Only Connecticut, the first state to pass a paid sick days law, has included a minimum employee threshold in its law. Should Maryland pass HB 382, it will be falling short of the standards set by other states that are currently "leading on leave."

HB 382 further needlessly excludes workers who work for any one employer for fewer than 30 hours per week. The Healthy Working Families Act already pro-rates paid sick time for part-time workers by allowing workers to earn one hour of time for every 30 hours worked. Under this system, someone working 40 hours per week at a single employer will earn the maximum 56 hours (7 days) of paid sick time per year, while someone only working 20 hours per week will earn just 34 hours per year.



The Healthy Working Families Act ensures that all working Marylanders can earn the time they need to care for themselves and their families. In contrast, HB 382 leaves about 240,000 Maryland workers unprotected.

In light of these contrasts, CLASP respectfully asks you to *reject* HB 382 and instead pass HB 1, the Healthy Working Families Act.

Sincerely,

Zoe Ziliak Michel, Ph.D.
Policy Analyst
CLASP