

Faith Leaders Urge Senate Support of the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act

Dear President Miller and Members of the Maryland State Senate,

We are religious leaders from congregations and denominations across Maryland who have joined together to promote the health and welfare of our community. While this will take many paths, we begin by challenging ourselves and asking you to join us in supporting the right of workers to earn sick leave in order to care for themselves or family members.

The basis for recognizing employee rights are the moral principles of autonomy, freedom, and human dignity. No one denies that these things exist, that they are morally valuable, and that we ought to recognize them as so.

Like all people everywhere, we rely on the health and well-being of our fellow human beings. When the health of workers is compromised by illness, they need time away from work to heal without fear of losing their jobs. People should not need to choose between earning an income to support themselves and their families or taking the time to restore their health or that of their family members. Where a worker's earned income is low, choosing to take off work can plunge the family into poverty and dependence on public assistance for survival. This is especially true for those who work in one or more less than full time jobs. Assuring that workers can earn time off for healing recognizes their worth and dignity and promotes the common good of our community.

We pray for employers and business owners, that they may all learn to value people over profit and for our elected leaders that they place those struggling on the margins at the center of their deliberations.

Please pass a strong, meaningful Maryland Healthy Working Families Act (SB472/HB580) that specifically includes the most vulnerable employees, the part-time workers. We also ask that you resist calls for exempting specific employers or types of businesses.

With blessing,

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