



**Testimony for the House Appropriations Committee
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HB 775 – State Employees – Parental Leave

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SUPPORT

The ACLU of Maryland supports HB 775, which provides up to 60 days of paid parental leave to an employee in the Legislative or Executive branches of State government who is responsible for the care and nurturing of a child to care for the child within one year following the child’s birth or adoption.

No Marylander—or Maryland couple—should have to compromise their employment or income for taking time off when they have a child, especially at a time when families’ finances are stretched and jobs can be hard to find. Particularly in tough economic times, job or income loss can cause workers and their families to fall into poverty and turn to public assistance and other public programs that cost taxpayers money.

Moreover, parental leave is cost-effective for state employers because it reduces costs for recruitment and retraining, and increases commitment and motivation among employees.¹

This bill also helps avoid unnecessary health care expenses by allowing parents to care for a new child. Without the proper care a child must obtain at birth, it could potentially lead to major health problems — and higher medical costs — down the line.²

Too many families can’t access the time they need to care for their new children. When a family has a child or adopts a child, they may face impossible choices between the health of their new child and economic stability. No family should have to choose between caring for a baby and maintaining job stability. HB 775 will help resolve this problem.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 775.

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¹ Institute for Women’s and Policy Research, *Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption leave in the United States* (May 2011).

² For instance, breastfeeding and the use of human milk have shown to optimize infant, child, and adult health as well as child growth and development. Recently, published evidence-based studies have confirmed the risks of not breastfeeding, and concluded that breastfeeding should be seen as a “basic health issue” and “is essential and vital for the achievement of this preferred public health goal.” American Academy of Pediatrics, *Pediatrics: the Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk*, pg. 12 (Feb. 27, 2012), available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/02/22/peds.2011-3552>.