



**Testimony Concerning HB 580–
Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act
Submitted to the House Economic Matters Committee
March 1, 2016**

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports HB 580, which would allow employees to earn sick leave and use the leave that they have accrued to deal with an illness or that of an immediate family member.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other supports for children and their families. We have been active in state and federal debates on policies that address the needs of working families and are strongly committed to ensuring that they have the supports they need to care for their children while meeting the demands of their jobs.

Families headed by a single parent or families in which both parents work face particular challenges when their children are sick. In Maryland, 79 percent of children under the age of 12 have mothers in the workforce. Some of these parents, but not all, have the opportunity to use sick leave to care for ailing children. Those who don't have this flexibility have limited and often difficult choices.

Beyond the obvious advantages to parents and children, sick leave policies could benefit employers. A 1997 labor force study found that “workers who perceive that organizational culture is supportive of their family and personal needs are less stressed, more satisfied with their jobs, more successful in combining conflicting demands of work and home, more committed to their employer, and more likely to want to remain with their employer. Moreover, successful work/life business policies have shown positive results in reducing absenteeism, lowering the number of shortened or interrupted work days, reducing training costs, increasing productivity, and reducing staff turnover.”

Families have to juggle many demands on their time, but none are more important than their responsibilities to their children. HB 580 gives parents the opportunity to care for their sick children during their times of need. We urge your favorable consideration.