



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE + ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON + DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

## **STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 40 FLEXIBLE LEAVE ACT**

**Presented Thursday, February 14, 2008 to the  
House Economic Matters Committee**

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The Maryland Catholic Conference represents the public policy interests of the three Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which include the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. We offer this testimony in support of House Bill 40.

In their 2003 *Faithful Citizenship* statement, the U.S. Bishops urge us to “strive to make the needs and concerns of families a central national priority,” and to promote policies “designed to help families stay together and to reward responsibility and sacrifice for children.”

House Bill 40 promotes just such a policy, by ensuring that working families have the flexibility to use their paid leave to provide adequate care for a sick child, parent or spouse. This legislation gives important recognition to the reality that most families face today, where both parents must work in order to support their children, or where single parents struggle to balance their parenting and workplace responsibilities. Without requiring an undue burden on employers, the legislation ensures that employees can give appropriate priority to the needs of their families when necessary.

While some employees may already enjoy this flexibility, it is important to recognize the disparity with which this benefit is often provided. While workers in well-paid professional positions often receive generous leave with flexible options, the struggle of lower-income workers to support their families is often further complicated owing to the lack of such flexibility. This legislation is most especially important to protect the ability of these families to maintain employment and provide adequate care for their dependents.

As the U.S. Bishops state in *Faithful Citizenship*, “The economy must serve people, not the other way around. ...If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers, owners, and others must be respected.” In that spirit, we urge you to support House Bill 40.