

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 562:
Labor and Employment – Flexible Leave**

TO: Hon. Thomas Middleton, Chair, and members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Melissa Broome, Senior Policy Advocate
DATE: February 19, 2009

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-skill, low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. We support SB 562 as a way to clarify the Flexible Leave Act so that employers can ensure that their workers be able to use Flexible Leave to care for an ill child, spouse, or parent.

The Flexible Leave Act enables employees with accrued paid leave to use their leave to care for an ill child, spouse, or parent. SB 562 provides specific definitions of key terms found within the Act and clarifies that employees may use flexible leave under the same conditions and policy rules that apply when taking leave for their own illness. It also makes clear that the Flexible Leave Act does not affect the Federal Family Medical Leave Act.

As caregiving pressures increase dramatically for Maryland's working families, it is important that employers understand how to comply with the Flexible Leave Act so that no one has to choose between their job and their family. For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable committee report of SB 562.