



## House Bill 1524

### *Labor and Employment - Paid Leave - Attendance at School Functions*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Government, Labor, and Elections  
Committee

Date: February 26, 2026

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 1524. This bill would require employers, including counties as public employers, to provide at least 20 hours of paid leave annually to an employee who is a parent to attend a school function at the child's elementary or secondary school. While counties support parental involvement in education, this proposal represents an unfunded mandate that imposes significant fiscal and administrative burdens on local governments that already offer generous leave benefits.

Counties consistently provide robust leave packages, including vacation and personal leave that employees may use at their discretion, including to attend school events. HB 1524 would create a new, mandatory leave category separate from existing policies, awarding a benefit to one segment of employees that is not available to others. Moreover, the bill appears to grant the same 20-hour benefit to full-time and part-time employees, despite part-time employees working fewer hours and often having greater scheduling flexibility.

The bill also lacks a clear definition of "school function." This ambiguity invites inconsistent application and potential disputes. Additionally, counties currently lack an administrative mechanism in their payroll systems to identify which employees have elementary or secondary school-aged children. Establishing and maintaining such a system would require new processes to ensure that each eligible parent receives no more than 20 hours annually and no more than two hours per month.

Even assuming a low estimate that 50% of county employees have school-aged children, the cost of providing an additional 20 hours of paid leave annually is substantial. The added strain of a new leave mandate, particularly as counties continue preparing for implementation of the State's FAMILI program, reduces flexibility and increases operational challenges.

Counties recognize and value parental engagement in education. However, given existing leave policies and the significant fiscal and administrative burdens, HB 1524 is unnecessary and counterproductive. For these reasons, MACo respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 1524.