

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1241 (Delegate Acevero, *et al.*)
Government, Labor, and Elections

Labor and Employment - Bereavement Leave - Qualified Relationships

This bill expands authorized uses of bereavement leave under the Maryland’s Flexible Leave Act by requiring a private-sector employer with at least 15 employees who provides paid leave to its employees to allow an employee to use earned paid leave for bereavement leave upon the death of an individual with whom the employee had a qualified relationship, instead of only for an immediate family member. Additionally, the bill repeals the definition of “immediate family” under Maryland’s Flexible Leave Act.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Maryland Department of Labor can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources. The bill does not apply to the State as an employer. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None. The bill pertains exclusively to private-sector employers.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: For bereavement leave, a qualified relationship includes a relationship with: an immediate family member, a grandparent, a sibling, a domestic partner, a step-relation, an adoptive relation, a foster relation, and a de facto relation.

The bill repeals the definition of “immediate family,” so immediate family is undefined for purposes of using leave to take care of an immediate family member who is ill or for bereavement leave purposes.

Current Law: A private-sector employer with at least 15 employees who provides paid leave to its employees must allow an employee to use earned paid leave to care for an immediate family member who is ill or for bereavement leave upon the death of an immediate family member. Immediate family member is a child, spouse, or parent.

For purposes of taking leave to care for a family member under the Maryland Flexible Leave Act, “child” is defined as an adopted, biological, or foster child; stepchild; or legal ward who is either younger than 18 or at least 18 years old and incapable of self-care due to a mental or physical disability. For bereavement leave only, “child” also includes an adult child (adopted, biological, or foster child; stepchild; or legal ward).

An employer is prohibited from taking action against an employee who exercises the rights granted or against an employee who files a complaint, testifies against, or assists in an action brought against the employer for a violation of these provisions.

Employees who earn more than one type of paid leave from their employers may elect the type and amount of paid leave to be used in caring for their immediate family members.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Labor; Office of the Attorney General; Department of Legislative Services

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