

I'm writing to implore the members of this committee to support Sam Rasoul's House Bill 1098 (HB1098). There are many difficult lessons we as a society learned as a result of the COVID pandemic, but one of them was just how important mental health and work-life balance are – and what happens when we neglect them. Bereavement leave for employees is a common sense way to assist with both of these necessities. Employees who experience familial loss need the adequate space to be able to tend to their and their family's emotional needs. Employees who don't get time off for bereavement are being signaled by their employers that their humanity comes second to their productive capacity. Such outmoded economic thinking ignores the most important part of the economic equation: human capital. While this bill only requires unpaid bereavement leave and only for employees who've worked at least 1,250 hours in the past year, this is unequivocally a step in the right direction for employee wellness. Endemic to the word progressive is progress. This is progress, and passing this creates a foundation from which we as a Commonwealth can continue to show that we care about businesses AND employees. They aren't mutually exclusive.