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**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD BEFORE THE GEORGIA HOUSE INDUSTRY AND LABOR  
COMMITTEE ON HB-1318 “LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS; ACTUARIAL STUDY  
ON STATE BASED PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM;  
PROVIDE”**

**March 2, 2026**

**Rachel Shanklin, Georgia Director  
Small Business Majority**

Dear Members of the Georgia House Industry and Labor Committee:

My name is Rachel Shanklin and I’m the Georgia Director for Small Business Majority, a small business organization with a mission to empower America’s diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy. I’m pleased to share comments on HB 1318, legislation that would fund an independent study to evaluate a cost-effective paid family and medical leave program.

Over four million Georgians don’t have access to paid family and medical leave though their job, while two-thirds can’t even access unpaid leave through the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.<sup>1</sup> These workers are often forced to choose between keeping their job and taking care of serious family health needs. In the thirteen states with established paid family and medical leave insurance programs, workers can maintain access to partial income while taking essential leave for critical life events like welcoming a new child and caring for their own or an immediate family member’s serious health condition.

Paid family and medical leave doesn’t just help employees: it makes good business sense. As small businesses struggle to recruit and retain a talented workforce, larger companies are often more attractive employment destinations since they are usually able to offer comprehensive benefits packages that small businesses simply cannot afford to offer on their own. Entrepreneurs also believe that paid family and medical leave would lead to a more cohesive, productive workforce with better morale and lower turnover.<sup>2</sup>

This legislation would appropriate \$90,000 for an independent actuarial study to evaluate a paid family and medical leave program. It would ensure that a plan would deliver benefits without drawing on state revenues, so that a carefully structured Georgia program could be fiscally responsible and sustainable. We urge you to pass HB 1318 and take the first step toward making this crucial benefit available to Georgia small business owners and their employees

Sincerely,

Rachel Shanklin  
Georgia Director  
Small Business Majority

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<sup>1</sup> “Paid Leave Means a Stronger Georgia.” National Partnership for Women & Families. February 2026. <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-georgia.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Small businesses support a national paid family & medical leave program.” Small Business Majority and National Partnership for Women & Families. October 24, 2024. <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/workforce/small-businesses-support-national-paid-family-medical-leave-program>