



**JEWES UNITED**  
FOR JUSTICE

*original art by Liora Ostroff*

## TABLE DISCUSSION

*Havruta* is a Jewish practice of deeply studying a text together with another person to learn what that text can teach us. We encourage you to find a partner or two to read the text study below, and discuss the questions that follow.

## TEXT STUDY

In a widely cited verse in the Torah, we are commanded:

“Do not oppress the hired laborer who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your people or one of the sojourners in your land within your gates. Give him his wages in daytime, and do not let the sun set on them, for he is poor, and his life depends on them, lest he cry out to God about you, for this will be counted as a sin for you.”<sup>7</sup>

According to this passage, workers should never fear that they will not receive their wages. According to rabbis in the Talmud, this also includes work that was not completed due to unexpected incidents like the weather, illness, etc.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. More than half of Maryland workers — 1.1 million people — work in small businesses. Many small businesses can't afford to provide paid family and medical leave, even when business owners want to provide those benefits. How does The Time to Care Act help employers ensure that, in the spirit of Torah, their “employees will receive their wages?” What are the pros and cons of creating a public insurance fund to care for our community members, rather than relying on private employers to provide this benefit?
2. Employees who have access to paid family and medical leave report higher job satisfaction and loyalty, factors that increase productivity. Have you ever had to leave or change a job you enjoyed due to not having paid leave time? Have you ever feared you may not be able to maintain your income when having to care for yourself or others?
3. Does the current public health crisis related to COVID-19 (coronavirus) change the way you think about any of the above questions?

---

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 24:14-15