

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Labor and Housing: my name is Brendan Davison and I live in Bangor.

Living in Maine, we all know the dangers and the treachery posed by ice in the winter. Last year I got a first-hand lesson on this when I slipped and fell on the ice, breaking my arm, which required surgery to fix. But the fracture itself wasn't the only challenge I faced as a result of that fall.

My employer at the time offered only limited paid time off, and I had to use much of it while I spent the first two days recuperating, and then the next week recovering from the surgery. There were two days where I did attempt to work, but ultimately these were futile, as I learned quickly it was all but impossible to do my job with only one arm, and ultimately I had to take several unpaid days off to recover. Yet I am still one of the lucky ones.

Countless people in this state have no paid family or medical leave, and when suffering an injury as I did, cannot afford to lose a single dollar of income, and no one should have to push through an injury or sickness when they need to be recovering. No one should have to go into debt or risk their job recuperating from an injury or illness.

Maine needs to enact Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) for every worker in this state so no one who suffers an injury like I did is forced to choose between recovery and their livelihood. This will not only benefit people like me who suffer from accidents. This will allow those who contract COVID and the Flu to stay home and prevent further spread of the diseases. It will allow new parents time to spend bonding with their new child. It will allow family members to better care for those dealing with serious health issues.

I call upon the members of this committee to allocate funds in this budget to the estimated \$65 million in startup costs to create Paid Family and Medical Leave for Mainers, before anyone else suffers a fall on the ice and is forced to choose between recovery and their livelihood.