

Lacey Donle
Lisbon Falls, ME
May 25, 2023

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing,

My name is Lacey Donle and I have been a full time employee of small non profit social service organizations in Southern and Central Maine for the past 18 years. I write today in support of LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program

I have held multiple mid level leadership positions in which I was responsible for supervising employees and working with them to develop plans for when they need to be out of work.

One story of a part time employee I supervised who could have benefited from Paid Family and Medical Leave stands out in my mind. Many part time employees do not earn any paid time off, however some employers do provide a small amount of paid time off prorated for hours worked. This employee was earning a small amount of paid time each pay period. However, it was not sufficient to cover a few days leave which this employee requested to take in order to care for a roommate who was having surgery. As a supervisor and a human being, I approved the time off request, but as a small employer, were unable to fully pay the employee for their time off and some of the time went unpaid. This employee had to choose between two bad choices, lose income from taking unpaid time off, or leave a close friend home alone without adequate care and supervision after a major medical procedure.

The Definition of Family in LD 1964 which includes affinity relationships, so that an individual is entitled to use paid leave to take care of a person who is considered family, is critical to maintain as written.

If Paid Family and Medical Leave had been in place, the employee in this story could have been focused on taking care of their roommate during a time of medical need, rather than worrying about how they would pay bills if they took time off to care for their friend. In addition, the person having surgery may have had a shorter recovery time and less medical complications post surgery because they would have been able to get the care at home that their doctor recommended, not just what the employee I supervised could afford to provide in terms of lost income.

Therefore, I urge the committee to support LD 1964. Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue.