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Brunswick
LD 1964

My name is Kristin Jackson, I'm a Brunswick resident, and I'm submitting testimony in strong support of LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program.

In 2021, I gave birth to my first child. I was lucky enough to have 12 weeks of parental leave from my employer, and my husband was given 4 weeks of half-paid leave to take with me. And that leave was incredibly critical. For the first two weeks of my child's life we had feeding issues, and every 3 hours around the clock we had to do a feeding regimen that took an hour with both of us involved. This meant never sleeping for more than an hour at a time if we were lucky. If either of us had had to work it simply wouldn't have been possible - we were barely functioning. If I had had to return to work, I would have quit.

And regardless of issues, a baby is meant to be with its parents. We don't allow puppies to be separated from their mothers until they're at least 8 weeks old, but we don't give the same decency for our community members. Young babies are also incredibly fragile. My daughter got a stomach bug from daycare when she was five months old, and because she was so young and it hit her so hard, we had to take her to the ER for dehydration. Had she been older and sturdier, that likely would not have been the case.

Additionally, our state is facing a childcare crisis. I've had multiple friends leave the workforce because they can't find childcare for their children. We got our daughter into one daycare, but have been on other waitlists for over a year and a half. If each parent gets 12 weeks of leave, there's more time to find the childcare you need to go back to work.

Thank you for your time, and please do the right thing for Maine families and pass LD 1964.