Testimony In Support of LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program

John Flaherty-Stanford
Portland, ME
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Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing,

My name is John Flaherty-Stanford and I live in Portland, where I am the sole proprietor of a pet care business called The Posh Pups. I am testifying in support of Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) for Maine.

I have been a citizen of the United States since 2015. But I am originally from a town near London called Epsom. Over the past few years, both my mother and my uncle became ill and passed away, and both times I traveled back to Epsom to help care for them.

I was glad that I was able to travel back and forth to care for my family members and provide some respite for my sister who cared for our mother during her illness.

But the financial costs of taking time to help my family when they most needed it were real.The fact is that every day I wasn't working, I was losing money. When I wasn't spending time with my mother and uncle, I was poring over our family's financial spreadsheet, moving money from one column to another and figuring out how we could pay our bills without my income.

I love my work and I love running my own business. But losing my income is hard for my family, and in my position some small business people would have been forced to choose between caring for their ill family members and paying the bills.

At one time or another, we all need to take time out to deal with major events, as I did. We need a comprehensive PFML program so that *all* workers, including sole proprietors like me, can take the time we need to care for ourselves and our families.

With comprehensive PFML, I will be able to care for my family here in the US when they need me; and, as I get older, taking time out to care for myself. That's how it should be.

I respectfully urge you to vote yes on LD 1964. Thank you.