

Alex Petrovich
Bryant Pond
LD 1964

My name is Alex Kai and I am a resident of Woodstock. I am submitting 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.

Last year my wife needed surgery to fix a chronic hernia problem. She was unable to do much around the home for about a month before the actual surgery itself due to her condition. After the surgery, she was given a six week recovery time, but due to her chronic health problems, those six weeks became eight. So for three months my wife was completely out of commission and unable to work or care for our young daughter.

During this time I was working a fulltime job, in which I had to take several unpaid days off to take care of my wife and help care for the kiddo. I am grateful to my job for giving me the time off, and not risking my overall employment. Throughout all of this, I kept my job and still work there today. But because the days off were unpaid, my paychecks couldn't cover the costs of living and we fell behind on bills, and struggled to keep food on the table.

Having the Paid Family Medical Leave Act would have been the difference between three months of stress, food insecurities, and falling behind on bills, with three months of being able to focus on my wife's recovery. Having the ability to take time off without worrying about being able to pay bills or put food on the table, would have made all the difference to my family during one of the toughest times in recent years for us. We need a strong Paid Family and Medical Leave program here in Maine so workers like me don't have to make the difficult choices I did.

Thank you.