

Sidney Pew
East Andover
LD 1964

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing: My name is Sidney Pew and I live in East Andover. 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 am a retired small business owner.

For nearly forty years, I ran and operated a small business called King Kong Services, Inc. out of my home office. I typically employed four to five people who joined me in cleaning windows around the state and northeast United States. I worked alongside my staff cleaning windows in private homes, office spaces, hospitals, and more. My employees would work three seasons of the year: spring, summer, and fall. For obvious reasons, we typically did not clean windows in the winter.

My employees came back to me year after year. I had one employee who worked with me for almost two decades. They knew their job was safe with me during the window cleaning season. That stability made it possible for them to do some future planning: they would work elsewhere during the winter, but were able to come back to stable employment year after year.

Stability is important. My employees' jobs were protected. Job protection is important. Small businesses especially need to be able to compete in today's market with bigger companies. I loved knowing things about my employees - what they were studying in college, what their wife did for work, what their interests were. People working at large companies don't always get that face to face with the boss like my employees did with me. But, it's hard for a small business to compete with the benefits the larger companies are able to provide.

Providing paid family and medical leave to employees through a public insurance plan, administered by the state, would save both the state and the employer money, angst, and time. Just like my workers were able to return to King Kong Services, Inc. year after year, workers need to know that their job is safe if they were to take time off due to the arrival of a new child, injury, or any other reason they may need leave under this law.

A key part of the law must make sure that nobody faces retaliation or job loss for taking the leave they need. I urge this committee to take my comments into consideration when it comes to moving this bill to the next step. Without a strong job protection, workers will continue to work through life changing events without taking the time they or loved ones need to recover. Plus, it'll make it harder for small businesses to continue to compete with larger ones that are able to provide the time.

I urge you to support a strong Paid Family and Medical bill that makes it even more possible for small business owners to compete in today's market. Strengthen this bill for all workers.

Thank you.

Sidney Pew
East Andover, Maine