

Elek Pew  
Gray  
LD 1964

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing: My name is Elek Pew and I live in Gray. 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 recently turned thirty. My friends are starting to have kids. My parents are turning seventy this year. There are big life changes happening all around me. I have very candid conversations with my parents about them getting older. What are the plans if they cannot physically, emotionally, and financially support themselves? My sister and I are a team, but we are also young and are trying to make future plans of our own.

Without a strong, statewide, paid family and medical leave program, making those plans will be extremely difficult. Although I am fortunate enough to have a job that provides paid vacation & paternity leave, which I am seriously grateful for, if I needed to take extended time off I would have to file for FMLA. This means that I would be taking unpaid leave, but who can afford to take unpaid leave in this day and age?

I think a lot about what's to come, and not just for me. I think about everyone else who may not be as fortunate and doesn't have a modest safety net. If someone's parents get sick, I want them to be able to spend as much time as possible with their loved ones. If two partners decide to have kids, I want them to be able to spend time bonding with their newborn. People need to be able to take the time to care for loved ones without worrying about paying the bills.

This past November, I stood outside my polling location in Gray talking to voters about Paid Family and Medical Leave, collecting signatures to put this program on the ballot if needed. So many Mainers expressed the need for a PFML program. They told me about their children, the health scares of their loved ones, and the fear they had about making ends meet.

This is a popular program. Our state needs it. Mainers need it. Maine needs a strong Paid Family and Medical Leave program.

Thank you,  
Elek Pew