



James Slotnick
VP, Government Relations

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May 25, 2023

Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

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

On behalf of Sun Life and our 500 employees who live in Maine, we respectfully submit this statement regarding the Committee's hearing on LD 1964.

With Governor Walz scheduled to sign legislation in Minnesota this afternoon, there are now 12 states and the District of Columbia with statutory Paid Family and Medical Leave ("PFML") programs. While these 13 programs have common elements, they are uniquely designed to meet the particular needs of each state's workforce. The New England region is a good example of the differences that can exist in PFML programs, with Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island all running comprehensive programs that have significant differences in the number of weeks of leave, the income replacement scales, and payroll tax components.

Sun Life has a unique perspective on PFML, being both a large employer in Maine and a leading employee benefits insurer. As an employer, we offer a comprehensive PFML benefit to all our employees across the country, regardless of where they live or work. As an employee benefits insurer, in states with PFML requirements, we partner with employers to offer "private plans," allowing an employer to provide PFML benefits to their employees that either meet or exceed the statutory requirements.

We view the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program ("the Commission") as having delivered on its mandate. The Commission had open dialogue with both advocates and the business committee while also considering lessons learned from other state programs. We found it noteworthy that the Commission endorsed a number of best practices from other state PFML programs, including the inclusion of private plans. For those Maine businesses already offering PFML type benefits, this private plan option will reduce their administrative compliance burdens.

In our experience, the most successful statutory PFML programs are designed through collaboration among advocates, the business committee, employee benefit insurers, and elected officials. The Commission has followed that model, and this work is reflected in their proposal.

We view today's hearing as a key step in the legislative process, but not as the end of the road. We support creating a PFML program for Maine, and look forward to continued discussions with all interested parties.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Slotnick". The signature is stylized and cursive.

James Slotnick
VP, Government Relations