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This bill would put small, seasonal hospitality businesses like mine out of business very quickly. My 12-room B&B employs 2 full-time year round, 2-3 others very part-time year-round as needed, and about 4 seasonal employees May - October, who, by the way, are EXTREMELY difficult to find and hire every year. Some return, others do not. For seasonal employees to receive benefits like those described in this bill, employers like myself could be terribly taken advantage of. Not to mention having to PAY to fund this ridiculous legislation! Imagine hiring your desperately needed seasonal staff in May, getting them trained for the season, only to have one or more of them leave for 3 months with full pay because someone close to them needed care? Really?? This is so over the top, it's absurd! Such enormously generous benefits should be an OPTION for employers who can afford to provide them for their full time year round employees. Standard practice is for medical benefits and vacation pay to be offered and earned only after a 90 day probation period. Standard practice is for extended leaves of absence only to be partially paid. Standard practice is for small employers to be exempt from such costly requirements because they typically don't have sufficient financial or human resources to be able to manage it. Standard practice is for seasonal employees to be excluded from most if not all such benefits because they're a part of the organization only transiently and it doesn't make logistical or financial sense to be bringing them on and off benefits. Seasonal employment is the workers' choice. If people WANT to work year round, they most certainly have plenty of opportunity to do so. There are far more open positions than people looking for work.

The costs of wages, food, linens other supplies and especially mortgage INTEREST rates have risen at least 25% over the last two years. My own mortgage interest rate will be increasing from 4.75% to 8% or more in August. This alone is going to increase my mortgage payment, my largest expense, by more than 35%! Do you think my guests would tolerate a rate increase of 25 - 35%??? They won't. If Maine businesses have to increase their prices and rates to cover the cost of this increased burden, Maine will no longer be an affordable place for people to visit and vacation.

I began offering medical benefits to my year round employees last year, which increased my total payroll costs by 10%. I'm the first owner of this property to offer medical benefits to employees and I'm very happy to be able to do it. This FMLA benefit is NOT something most businesses can afford. Paying people for NOT working during the pandemic (when they COULD HAVE BEEN working) created disastrous effects that are still being felt, particularly through the hospitality and retail sectors. This FMLA proposal seems to be a continuation and amplification of that. Long term care insurance is something workers can purchase if they want to. Employers should NOT be mandated to pay for it, or to allow employees extended leave when there are so few employees to support the business in the first place.

PLEASE look at what other states are doing, think about what the reasons may be behind that, and try to understand what something like this would do to Maine businesses.. You put employers out of business, you create thousands of unemployed people, lose tax revenue, etc. etc. You also create a huge barrier for anyone considering opening a business in Maine, and any company considering moving their business to Maine. PLEASE do not allow this to happen.