

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Labor and Housing Committee: my name is Natalie DiPentino, I live in West Enfield, and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1964.

Two months ago, my second grandchild was born to my middle son and his wife. They also have a 2-year-old at home. Due to difficulty finding childcare in their area, the couple decided that she would stay home with the children while my son works on a small, local farm where he makes just enough to cover their mortgage, bills, car payment, and essentials. My son, who is 22, loves his job and has worked there since he was a teenager.

The baby was born with some serious health issues which resulted in my son missing work. On top of that, my daughter-in-law developed postpartum anxiety that turned into postpartum psychosis. Due to this condition, my daughter-in-law cannot be left alone with the children while we are still seeking the right treatment for her. My son has missed so much work that he is now behind with his mortgage, and everything else and was afraid of losing his job. My daughter-in-law's mother and I have been taking turns taking care of the children while she seeks treatment, but the burden is so great on all of us.

My son's employer has a staff of 3 full-time employees and at the height of the season employs up to six. He could not afford to offer paid family medical leave to my son but did allow him to keep his job and be flexible with his hours to accommodate his family situation.

If paid family medical leave, as proposed in LD 1964, were active right now, it would have helped my son and his wife tremendously. It would have also eased the burden on me as well. I still have two of my children at home to take care of. It is my hope that this bill is allowed to pass so that no other suffering families must make dangerous or financially disastrous compromises to survive and take care of their loved ones. I urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Natalie DiPentino