

Good Afternoon Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and distinguished members of the Committee on Labor and Housing.

My name is Betsy Williams and I live in Brunswick. I am testifying today in favor of LD 1964 on behalf of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network which links Maine's 26 Unitarian Universalist congregations in working for legislation that centers on compassion and respect for all Mainers in personal and communal affairs.

As a state that boasts it's "open for business," we need to do all we can to support business at the most basic level—its workers. Paid family and medical leave, as proposed by LD 1964 is one such effort. I'm quite sure it won't be hard for anyone in this room to relate to the following scenarios.

Imagine you are a 20 or 30-something-year-old worker likely to have both children or parents who require your full attention for a short period due to an illness or accident. Or you are a 40 or 50-something-year-old worker, finding yourself with a frightening cancer diagnosis requiring aggressive treatment that will keep you out of work for days if not weeks. Or you're a 60 or 70-something-year-old worker, waiting eagerly for retirement, finding yourself called to stay temporarily with a grandchild while your own child undergoes treatment for an illness or accident. But none of you can afford to take time off without pay.

Paid medical and family leave is for everyone—all ages, all workers—and it will make all businesses more appealing to workers here in Maine. As you consider concerns about increase costs for employers and employees, remember the hidden costs of life-changing events that can be mitigated by the security of a few weeks paid leave.

There is often a cost to being a compassionate and respectful governing body, a compassionate and respectful society. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, and I paraphrase, the beloved community is a place where *we walk in the light of creative altruism, not destructive selfishness*. All of us are lifted when we give of ourselves to support those in need, when we create public policies of creative altruism, such as LD 1964. Please vote Ought to Pass. Thank you.