

Ian Hathaway
Naples, Maine
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Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Honorable Members of the Labor Committee,

My name is Ian Hathaway and I am a resident of Naples, an avid outdoorsman, and a Registered Maine Guide. I write to you today in opposition of the bills before the committee that seek to limit the upcoming Maine Paid Family Leave program.

I was born and raised in Harpswell and attended the University of Maine in Orono for both my undergraduate and graduate degree programs, where I received a B.A. in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, as well as an M.S. in Forest Resources. I studied in these programs because I sought to protect the natural environment in Maine and preserve its beauty and wildness for generations to come, hoping to share it with my children someday. Seeking diverse experiences, I have lived in Montana and Massachusetts since my time in college, and after my wife finished her graduate program, we chose to return to this state to be with our families, including my parents, and my wife's father. The possibility of utilizing the PFML benefits to assist our aging family members if a situation arose in which they need additional support brings us comfort and peace of mind as their needs change over time.

A significant factor in our decision to return to Maine, even though my wife had job prospects in both Massachusetts and New York (where paid family leave programs already exist), was the PFML program that Maine was scheduled to implement. Home prices have made building a life in this state difficult, and the limited healthcare infrastructure add undue stress to child rearing, but we still returned with the hope that our plan to start a family would be supported by this legislation, and we would be afforded precious time in the early stages of child development in which bonding is so important.

We, along with several other young couples we know, have chosen to delay our familial expansion to focus on our careers in this state. I work for a small non-profit dedicated to expanding outdoor recreation in the Maine Appalachian Mountains, and my wife, a Physician Associate, works in a rural Federally Qualified Health Center, providing essential primary care to Maine people.

Without this legislation in place, we are not sure that Maine would have been our choice for our permanent home, and as much as we love this state, are not sure that we could recommend it to our peers as an ideal location to raise a family.

In a time where so many are struggling to afford homes and childcare, and build lasting careers in an aging state, the gutting of this legislation could very well leave young people without incentive to become a part of the Maine community. It certainly makes me think twice about raising children in this state, when others so near seem significantly more interested in providing support for new families.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you.