

Protect Maine Family and Medical Leave

I am writing to support keeping the Paid Family and Medical Leave Program as it is, without change or amendment, for the current time. Mainers from all walks of life and political parties supported this bill. It was carefully researched and developed using experience from other states where it is successful. Most employees want to support co-workers, knowing that it makes a more cohesive and effective work environment. Care taking by family member is less costly to society than in-patient medical care, especially given the shortages we are currently experiencing in health care settings. The original bill has not had time to be completely implemented and evaluated. Let's be thoughtful and prudent in giving it the time it needs. The flurry of bills trying to repeal or amend it, show a lack of consensus about how or what should be changed. The "emergency" designation is overblown. With all the other problems that need to be addressed, time and tax payer money could be better spent addressing those pressing issues.

I did not work at a time when there was paid family leave. When I had cancer, my supervisor said she was not going to make the same mistake she had made with another cancer survivor. She would not let me get away with taking too much time off. I immediately went to human resources to see what my options were. They gave me reassurance that I was a valued employee. Within reason, I could take the time I needed. I had a child in college at the time. My salary was going to pay her board and tuition. By taking the threat of losing my job off my shoulders, I was able to work four 10 hour days weekly. Throughout my three surgeries, four months of chemotherapy, seven weeks of radiation, and management of a blood clot in my subclavian vein, I took only two sick days. I would have benefited from a few more had that threat not been hanging over me, but I am grateful for the support of HR and the access to my full salary. My daughter graduated with honors.

Similarly, when my father-in-law was on hospice and dying, he wanted to stay and die at home. I was working full time and had the bulk of care and transportation for our two young daughters. My husband worked close to where his father lived and gave him care before work, at lunch time, and at supper and evening time. He came home only to sleep. In his father's last week, my husband and I both took care of him for 8 hours. We hired a nurse to spend the eight hours of night. John's father died at home with his two living children present, but the burden on our family was enormous. John ended up with a C grade on the graduate course he was taking, which he then had to take again. We saved the public much money by lowering the cost of his father's medical care, through keeping him at home. Paid medical leave would have lowered the burden on our family at a much lower cost than that of institutional care.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.

Elizabeth-Ellen Clark
Waterville, Maine
April 22, 2025