

Mayor and Council Offices

Mark Dion

Mayor

April 22, 2025



Testimony of Mayor of the City of Portland, Mark Dion

Before

Committee on Labor

In Opposition to

LD 1400, An Act to Exempt Certain Public School Districts and Their Employees from the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program

April 22, 2025

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and distinguished members of the Committee on Labor, I write on behalf of the City of Portland in opposition to LD 1400, which proposes to exempt certain public school districts and their employees from participation in Maine's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Benefits Program.

Portland strongly supports universal access to paid family and medical leave, including for all public sector employees. Our school district is one of the largest in the state, and we know from experience how important it is to provide educators and support staff with the time and flexibility they need to care for their families, recover from illness, and support loved ones through medical challenges. These protections not only benefit workers, but also contribute to retention, morale, and the long-term stability of our education workforce.

Allowing exemptions for public school districts would undermine the equity and universality of the PFML program and create a fragmented system of benefits across the state. It would send the message that public sector workers, including educators who serve our children every day, are less deserving of the same protections afforded to others.

From a municipal perspective, we are also concerned that exempting school employees would create administrative complications and labor market disparities, particularly in communities like Portland where the city and school employees operate under shared governance. Inconsistent participation could lead to confusion, inequity, and avoidable human resources challenges.

The City of Portland believes that paid leave should be a baseline benefit for all workers in Maine, regardless of employer. We urge the Committee to vote “ought not to pass” on LD 1400 preserve the integrity of the state’s new PFML program and ensure that it remains inclusive of all public school employees.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Dion", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dion
Mayor
City of Portland, Maine