

# PROTECT MAINE PAID FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE - Testimony Guide

At least 12 bills to undermine or overturn Maine's new Paid Family and Medical Leave program (PFML) have been submitted this year, and we need YOUR voice to help us protect this powerful program for Mainers! **Here's how to protect PFML:**

Several of the bills attempting to rollback PFML will have a public hearing in the Labor Committee on **Wednesday April 23rd at 1:00 PM**. We're looking for as many Mainers as possible to testify **AGAINST** these anti- PFML bills to help us protect the program (bill info in FAQs).

**This is a guide for how to write and give testimony.**

Public hearings are a key opportunity for lawmakers to hear from the public and relevant stakeholders about the pros and cons of proposed legislation. Anyone can write/deliver testimony on any bill! **If you are interested in testifying on any bill, you can:**

1. Come **in person** to the Maine State House in Augusta to deliver live, spoken testimony
2. **Write and submit written testimony** any time *before* the public hearing
3. Deliver live, spoken testimony **remotely on Zoom**

**If you plan to testify, please sign up on our [commitment form here!](#)**

## **This guide includes:**

Part 1: Overview of what testimony and a public hearing is (**page 1**)

Part 2: How to write your testimony (ideas for what to say and how to format it) (**page 2**)

Part 3: What to know about PFML and What to Say in your Testimony (**page 3**)

Part 4: FAQs – including info on how to testify/ submit testimony (**page 4**)

Questions? Need assistance? Email [Lily@mainewomen.org](mailto:Lily@mainewomen.org)

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## **Part 1: Overview of Testimony and Public Hearings**

Testimony is a brief (no longer than 4 minutes) personal statement expressing your opinion about a proposed piece of legislation at the public hearing for the bill. Public hearings happen in front of a “Committee” of legislators responsible for reviewing the merits of all bills on a specific topic (for example, the Committee on Transportation hears every bill related to the topic of... you guessed it, Transportation!).

**Public hearings are the Committee Members' opportunity to hear from the public and relevant stakeholders about the pros and cons of proposed legislation before the Members vote for or against a bill** (if the majority of Committee Members vote in support of a bill, it then moves “on” in the process of becoming a law, and if a majority of Members vote against the bill, the bill “dies”).

Please note that ALL submitted testimony (written and spoken) is public record and viewable (forever) to the public.

## Part 2: How to Write Testimony

**Step One:** Review the bills and issue.

- Review the bill language. Consider what the proposed bills would do and what it would change; then think about how that change would impact you.
- In this case, consider the POSITIVE impacts that the Paid Leave law will have on you and your family and why protecting it is so important.
- [HERE](#) is an explainer on the PFML program. And testimony guidance on page 3 and more details on each bill in the FAQ section (page 6-7). Remember that you don't need to be an expert on all the technicalities of PFML to write testimony! Your personal story is the most important "data" to share!

**Step Two:** Write your testimony.

- You technically have **four minutes to testify**, but *the shorter and tighter the testimony, the better!*
- You'll need to stick to 2-3 points.
- Focus on a "heart, head, and hands" storyline model (detailed more below):

**Step Three:** Read and revise

- Again, the shorter the better
- If you plan to speak your testimony, practice reading your testimony out loud so you feel confident reading it.
- Time yourself reading your testimony so that you know that it's under **4 minutes**.

## Testimony Outline

We highly recommend writing out your testimony, even if you plan to deliver it live. This template can help you format your testimony. It follows a simple format of a "heart, head, and hands" story. There is a full template on the next page.

<b>Header</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include your name</li><li>• Include the town you live in</li><li>• Include the date</li></ul> <p>Example:     <i>Jane Doe</i>                   <i>Anytown, Maine</i>                   <i>April 23, 2025</i></p>
<b>Salutation &amp; Introduction</b>	<p>Start with this salutation: "<i>Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Honorable Members of the Labor Committee.</i>"</p> <p>Your introductory paragraph should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. An expression of gratitude for the opportunity to testify: "<i>Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.</i>"</li><li>2. A personal introduction with your first and last name and town (and acknowledgement of any group/organization you are also representing): "<i>My name is [first and last], I'm a resident of Lewiston, and I am here on behalf of the Lewiston Knitting Club.</i>"</li></ol>

	3. A clear statement whether you are in favor of or opposed to the specific bill: <i>"I am here today in opposition of the bills before the committee today."</i>
<b>Heart</b> (what we feel)	Share your personal connection or story related to the issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What impact would the bill have on your or others' life/lives?</li> <li>• What might Committee Members not know about your life/experience that would help them understand why the bill matters?</li> </ul>
<b>Head</b> (what we think)	Drop a relevant fact or statistic - remember to keep this specific, there are many advocates who will have lots of data in their testimony. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the gaps/issues that you see this bill addressing? What stories or statistics do you have to back this up?</li> <li>• Why should this bill pass now (There are A LOT of urgent issues in the world, what should this bill be a priority?)</li> </ul>
<b>Hands</b> (what we do)	Directly connect your personal story to the policy. What would be different for you and others if this law passed?
<b>Closing</b>	Your final sentence should reiterate your gratitude for the opportunity to testify and re-state your position: <i>"Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" on these bills. Thank you!"</i>

### Part 3: What to know about PFML and What to Say in Your Testimony

As an employer or an employee (or both!) you can see the long term benefits of a PFML program and understand how it will help you, your coworkers/family/friends, and/or your employees. ***Your personal story and perspective is the most powerful message***– you don't need to know all the facts on the program, you just need to know why having paid leave would be beneficial to you! That said... specific info about the bills is in the FAQs.

HINT: Did you testify previously related to Paid Leave?– Don't feel like you need to start from scratch! Feel free to recycle all or parts of your previous testimony!

Here's some general things to know:

- **Mainers from all walks of life support Paid Family and Medical Leave.** Recent polling shows that 70% of Mainers support this program, with at least six in ten people supporting it across every demographic, including Republicans and Democrats, younger and older Mainers, and more.
- **This program works - but we need to let it work.** Creating a program that is financially solvent and that benefits workers and employers is possible and has been successful across the country, but it's not easy. **Removing some parts of the workforce, or tinkering levels of contributions or benefits, can have catastrophic effects. This program was carefully developed, and we need to let it do its job before making changes.**

Here are some helpful reminders about Maine's PFML program:

- **The premium rates are affordable, set at 0.5% or 1% of wages depending on the size of the employer – less than \$5.75/week for the average worker.** Employees only contribute up to half a percent of their wages. Employers with 15 employees or more will contribute half a percent of employee wages, and small employers with less than 15 employees are not required to contribute to the program.
- **States that have PFML programs continue to have a solid workforce.** Right now 13 states and Washington DC have PFML programs. Paid leave keeps people employed, helps retain employees and saves on turnover costs. A statewide paid leave program helps small businesses compete with larger companies when it comes to hiring and benefits.
- **Benefits cover a variety of qualifying reasons – it's more than parental leave.** Benefits will be available in 2026 and people can take leave for a variety of reasons. This includes to care for themselves or a family member with a serious health condition, to bond with a child after birth, adoption, or foster placement, and leave for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking.

Check out the last FAQ for more info on each of the proposed bills!

## Part 4: Testimony Submission FAQ

- How do I testify?

If you plan to testify, please sign up on our [commitment form here!](#) You have three options for providing testimony:

1. **Come in person** to the State House in Augusta!
2. **Submit written testimony online\*** (recommended if you can't attend in person)
3. **Testify live via Zoom\*** (when you sign up, they will share the zoom link and how to)

### 1. In person at the State House

**Step one:** Write the testimony. (More on that above).

**Step two:** Make copies and submit testimony in writing (details on how to above!).

- Bring 20 printed copies of your testimony.

**Step three:** Come to the State House on **April 23, 2025 at 1:00 PM.**

- The hearing is being held in the Labor Committee, Room 202 in the Cross Building (the building across from the State House)
- Directions and additional information can be found in Part 4.

**Step four:** Give your testimony.

- The Committee Chair will usually hear from the sponsor, then legislators, then people in support of the bill, then people opposed to the bill.
- When you are invited to testify, stand at the podium and sign your name on the sign-up sheet.
- Present your prepared testimony.
- When you finish, please remain at the podium for a moment, in case committee members want to ask you questions.

## **2. Submitting written testimony**

**Step one:** Write the testimony. (More on that above).

**Step two:** Sign up

- First, go to <https://www.mainelegislature.org/testimony/>
  - Select “Public Hearing”
- From the drop-down committee menu select “Labor”
- Next, on the date selection menu select April 23, 2025.
- Check the box for any of the 11 printed bills (*or you can submit the same testimony for all of them*): LD406 | LD539 | LD952 | LD 1169 | LD1221 | LD1249 | LD1273 | LD1307 | LD1333 | LD1400 | LD 1712
- Next, upload your testimony: You have two options for uploading your testimony:
  - Click “Choose File” to upload a file from your computer.
    - Testimonies must be submitted as a Word Document (.doc or .docx), a PDF, or a plain text document.
  - Alternatively, you may copy and paste the text of your testimony directly into the box provided.
- Enter your full name, town of residence, and email address in the appropriate boxes
- Click “submit/register” and you’re done!

## **3. Online on Zoom**

**Step one:** Write the testimony. (More on that above).

**Step two:** Sign up

- First, go to <https://www.mainelegislature.org/testimony/>
  - Select “Public Hearing”
- From the drop-down committee menu select “Labor”
- Next, on the date selection menu select “April 23rd 2025, 1:00 PM”
- Check the box for any of the 11 printed bills: LD406 | LD539 | LD952 | LD 1169 | LD1221 | LD1249 | LD1273 | LD1307 | LD1333 | LD1400 | LD 1712
- Click the box that reads: “I would like to testify electronically over Zoom”—and whether you are for or against the bill (or neither for nor against the bill).
- Upload a copy of your testimony: You have two options for uploading your testimony:
  - Click “Choose File” to upload a file from your computer
    - Testimonies must be submitted as a Word Document (.doc or .docx), a PDF, or a plain text document
  - Alternatively, you may copy and paste the text of your testimony directly into the box provided
- Add your name, town, email address, and phone number.
- Click submit/register
- After you sign up, you will receive an email with a link to the Zoom webinar.

**\*Note:** if you deliver live, spoken testimony remember to bring 20 copies of your testimony with you.

If you need any assistance with testimony preparation or submission, please email [Lily@mainewomen.org](mailto:Lily@mainewomen.org)




- **What is testimony, and why does it matter?**

Testimony is a short, personal statement you share with lawmakers to explain why you support or oppose a bill. It's one of the most powerful ways to influence policy—your story helps decision-makers understand the *real-life impact* of the legislation.

While some statistics may be helpful, Legislators are listening for personal impact on Maine families.

- **What should I include in my testimony?**

Use the "Heart, Head, and Hands" model:

-  **Heart (what we feel)** – Share your personal story or connection. How has doula care impacted you or your community? Why does this matter to you?
-  **Head (what we think)** – Share a key point or fact. What gaps does this bill address? What change would it create?
-  **Hands (what we do)** – Say what's possible if this bill passes. What would be different for families, for birthworkers, for you?

- **How long should my testimony be?**

**Less than 3 minutes if spoken, or 1 page or less if written.** Short and heartfelt is powerful! If you are testifying in person, practice your statement to ensure you stay within the time limit.

- **Can I get support to submit?**

Yes. If writing or submitting feels hard, we're here to help. You can reach out to the Maine Women's Lobby - [lily@mainewomen.org](mailto:lily@mainewomen.org)

- **Will my testimony be public?**

Yes. All written and spoken testimony becomes part of the public record and will be viewable online.

- **Have questions about the legislative process or want support?**

Connect with Lily at the Maine Women's Lobby - [lily@mainewomen.org](mailto:lily@mainewomen.org)

- **What's the deal with all the proposed bills?**

**Repeals program all together:** LD406 | LD539 | LD1273

These set of bills repeal the paid family and medical leave benefits program. Some (not all) of the bills require that employers be refunded the premium cost, and some (not all) also require employers to refund their employees. One bill would implement a voluntary program after repeal. **PFML is popular, now is not the time to repeal the program!**

**Creates harmful carve outs & delays:** LD952 | LD1400 | LD1249 | LD1333 | LD1712

These bills carve out certain sectors from participating in the program, like agriculture employees, some school districts, and seasonal employers. One bill (LD 1712) expands the hardship exemption for employers, carving out many workers including those working in small businesses and in seasonal positions. It also lowers the benefit wage replacement to a flat 65%, which negatively targets low income workers. Some of these bills also reduce access by changing job protection, and delay benefits from being administered until 2027 making workers pay into the program for another year. **The PFML program is well thought out, it needs to be available sooner (not later) and should not leave anyone behind!**

**Creates solvency risks:** LD 1169 | LD 1307 | LD 1712

These bills would stop premium payments, some would allow employers to request or receive a refund of their contributions if an employer has a substantially equivalent private plan that is approved. One bill (1712) also lowers the financial penalty for employer noncompliance. The law and rules are well thought out and have program solvency in mind. **Before the program even starts is not the time to risk PFML funding.**

**Wasteful and unnecessary:** LD1221

Proposing a Constitutional amendment to ensure that funds only be used for PFML benefits and administration is a waste of taxpayer dollars and is already secured through statute.