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Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Honorable Members of the Labor Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Mitchell Kohls, I am a parent, IBCLC, labor, and postpartum doula in Brewer, Maine. I am here today in opposition to the bills before the committee as they threaten the Paid Family Medical Leave that has been approved before it is even given a chance to succeed. (Specifically LD406, LD539, LD952, LD 1169, LD1221, LD1249, LD1273, LD1307, LD1333, LD1400, and LD 1712.)

I originally shared my story regarding my family and our struggles without PFML as well as our success with PMFL. I can say with 100% certainty that I would not have had an easy transition from two kids to three if my husband wasn't working in New York State at the time and provided with 12 weeks of paid leave after our son was born.

You see, he was in the NICU for 10 days following his traumatic entry into the world. I was already VERY high risk for PPD and PPA as I had suffered greatly after the birth of our second. On January 11, 2022, I delivered Remington, my sweet 10#8oz little boy. Then my world crashed. He was rushed to the NICU due to Neonatal Pulmonary Hypertension, basically his lungs weren't working to send him oxygen. Meanwhile, I was in Labor and Delivery, bleeding out. I lost well over 2.5 liters of blood that day and couldn't hold my son until he was 22 hours old.

Thankfully, our story has a happy ending. My husband was given paid leave through NY State's PFML and was able to handle everything at home during the little guy's NICU stay. He was also able to help us transition to home afterwards. Alex and Remington have THE BEST bond of all the kids, from day one, because daddy was able to have that bonding time.

As a doula, I have seen families, even mothers, return to work on the same day. I have also seen very sick family members still have to be at work instead of helping to care for their loved ones.

Mainers deserve better. I urge you to stand with Maine's families and vote OUGHT NOT TO PASS on the bills that would undermine Paid Family Medical Leave for Maine.

Thank you,

Mitchell Kohls  
Mom of three  
Owner of Livin' the Breast Life, LLC