

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and Distinguished members of the joint standing committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, My name is Addison Verrill, and I live in the town of Pittsfield. I am currently a junior at Maine Central Institute. I am testifying in support of LD-93, an act to ensure access for all caregivers to diaper changing stations in public restrooms.

My grandfather never changed my mother's diaper. His father had never changed his. In fact, my mother was toilet trained within two days when my grandmother went to work after my grandfather's union went on strike. He refused to change her diapers, despite the fact that he was, for that period, a stay-at-home dad. That was in the late '70's. Years have passed, and times have thankfully changed. This is no longer the reality. My father stayed home with my sister in her infancy while my mother worked. He learned to change diapers. He changed mine as well. The new reality is that both partners in a new family contribute to basic childcare, and that includes changing diapers.

However, public infrastructure does not reflect this reality. Restaurants, malls, and other public places often only have changing stations in the women's restroom or in a family restroom (if they have one), and not all places have such facilities. If a father is out with a baby, or maybe multiple babies, where can they change diapers?

Even if a mother or grandmother is with them, this lack of changing stations in all bathrooms promotes the inequitable distribution of childcare between parents, supporting the idea that the mother is the caregiver and the father need not worry themselves about such things. However supportive of equality the men in our society may be, they are forced to hand the baby off to their partner to change diapers because they do not have the facilities to do it themselves. While it may seem like a very small thing, this is a very important step in order to work toward a fair society in our state.

I appreciate your consideration of LD-93, and I hope that you will support this bill as it advances the goals of equity. Thank you.