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Testimony of Rep. Colleen Madigan in support of

**LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the
Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits
Program**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing

Good afternoon, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and colleagues on the Labor and Housing Committee. My name is Colleen Madigan and I live in Waterville and represent House District 64. I am here today to support **LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program.**

Most of you know me as a fellow legislator, a social worker. Maybe you know I have a really cute dog. Here is the part you don't know. I am a caregiver. Two years ago, I had to quit my paying job to care for my father as he was dying. I tried for months to juggle it all- my job, being a legislator and caring for my dad. Truth be told, I couldn't do a good job at all of it. I was only one person, but I was the only person in my family who could be that caregiver but I couldn't be in more than one place at a time. I couldn't be at work and field emergency calls from my dad's doctors and other providers. I couldn't take care of his home health needs without actually being at home with him. I got him his meals. I took over handling his medication, including following the Coumadin clinic's precise instructions on cutting pills and managing dosages. I took him to his appointments, talked with his doctors and had them explain things clearly for him because he was just so exhausted. Congestive heart failure is like that. When he was too tired to manage the stairs, I got him a hospital bed and turned my dining room into his room.

Some days, I helped him put on his socks. Two years ago, he died. I wouldn't change a second of what I did for my dad. He lived in my home with my mother. I care for my mother now. She's very frail and has multiple physical issues. I prepare three meals for her each day or arrange for someone to be there in my home to do so. I take her to all her appointments and obtain whatever she needs. I wish I could explain to you all how demanding caregiving is. It is 24 hours a day with no days off.

I support LD 1964 because I know firsthand that sometimes, balancing caring for a sick family member while working is impossible. I know there are many people like me out there. We need to value them and their work and the things they contribute. We also need to value family. Nobody chooses to have a family member who is very ill. Nobody chooses to get sick

District 64: Part of Waterville and part of Winslow

themselves. Nobody should be plunged into poverty because they are doing the very thing we claim to value above all else- taking care of family.