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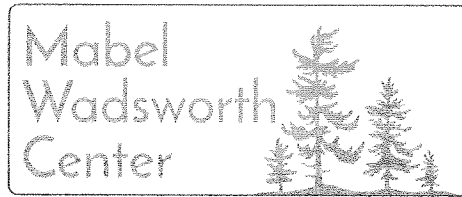
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they/them/theirs
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LD 1964 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to
Develop Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program
Public Testimony

I would like to begin by thanking the chairs Representative Roeder and Senator Tipping along with the rest of the Committee on Labor and Housing. I would also like to thank Senator Daughtry for sponsoring this bill, and the cosponsors for cosponsoring. My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am here today to speak on behalf of Mabel Wadsworth Center. Mabel Wadsworth Center is an independent, feminist, not-for-profit sexual and reproductive health center in Bangor that provides a wide range of services, including abortion care, prenatal care, STI testing and treatment, contraceptives, gender-affirming hormone therapy, and primary care. Today, we are here to urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1964.

With the care we provide at Mabel Wadsworth Center, we see firsthand every single day how a lack of paid family and medical leave harms our community. Currently, too many new parents are forced back to work not only when they should be bonding with their babies, but before their bodies are healed from birth. People are making pregnancy and family-building decisions not influenced primarily by their own desires, but by the lack of supports in place. This bill brings to mind a patient who terminated a pregnancy because she had been forced to return to work two weeks after a C-section with her first pregnancy, and she knew she could not do it again. Mainers deserve better. Mainers deserve to care for themselves and their families in communities that care for and support them, and paid leave is essential to that.

Mabel Wadsworth Center supports LD 1964 not just for our patients, but for our staff and for all workers in Maine. Those opposed to this bill have largely leaned



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on the tired argument of harm to small businesses. While Mabel Wadsworth Center is a non-profit, our small staff size places us in that category. We support this bill because workers are people, and people deserve paid leave to care for themselves and their families. Others have discussed how healthy workers are better workers, which is absolutely true, but more important than that is that people deserve happy and healthy lives where they can care for themselves and their loved ones without added financial burdens.

The people of Maine deserve paid family and medical leave. We urge you to vote in support of LD 1964. Thank you for your time.