



April 23, 2025

Senator Mike Tipping
Representative Amy Roeder
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

To the Joint Standing Committee on Labor:

On behalf of the Maine Youth Camp Association ("MYCA"), the non-profit organization of Maine camps throughout our state, we are pleased to submit this letter in support of LD 1712, An Act to Amend the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program to Balance Support of Businesses and Employees.

Children's camps are an important part of the fabric of our state, providing an outdoor educational experience for children from Maine, from across the country and around the world. Maine is the leader for children's camping. The first camps were established here more than 100 years ago. Today, there are approximately 170 licensed youth camps in Maine serving more than 50,000 children annually. Maine children fill nearly half of the available slots. In a normal season, Maine youth camps are responsible for approximately \$500 million of economic activity.


Maine Youth Camps provide our employees with good benefits and time in Maine's great outdoors as part of their work experience. We support efforts to provide all employees with fair wages and good benefits. But those benefits must be clearly defined, carefully balanced against costs, consistent with existing workplace challenges, and properly tailored towards those who need it.

As currently created in law and rule, Maine's new paid family medical leave program is out of line with other states in several respects. The amendments proposed in LD 1712 will help to address some of those discrepancies. The establishment of a 65% benefit of an employee's average weekly wage for all wage earners as proposed puts Maine much more consistent with the benefits given in other states. Setting a

maximum fine of \$50 per employee aligns Maine's remittance and reporting penalties with other states, notably Colorado and New Jersey. The removal of strict liability provisions for employer mistakes that was contained in the recently adopted rule should be removed in favor of allowing the department to use its discretion in assessing penalties. We further support language in LD 1712 that strengthens the determination of undue hardship to clarify that employers – especially small, seasonal employers – should be able to make reasonable determinations on this issue without constant bureaucratic reexamination.

LD 1712 is an excellent example of meaningful bipartisan work, and we would urge the Committee to pass it unanimously. Yet, from the perspective of Maine Summer Camps, it is incomplete. Our members hire more than 13,000 people every year to serve as counselors, nurses, kitchen staff, maintenance, program directors, front office, among many other responsibilities. For many of them, it's their first job. The vast majority work less than 120 days and make less than \$6,600 during the summer. Many of them aren't from Maine, and a good portion of that group are not even from the United States. None of these people will ever be able to avail themselves of the benefits of this program, despite being required to contribute to it.

Sincerely,


Lucy Norvell
Executive Director

