

Cassie Nedwell

Cape Elizabeth, Maine

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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 Cassie Nedwell, I'm a resident of Cape Elizabeth, and I am here on behalf of protecting Paid Family Medical Leave

As a mom of three, I've had vastly different postpartum experiences with each of my children. With my first child, I was fortunate to have 8 weeks of paid leave, which allowed me to navigate the challenges of new motherhood. Those weeks flew by, but they were invaluable for bonding with my son and learning the ropes as a new mom. In contrast, with my second child, I had no paid time off and my husband couldn't take leave either. The stress of managing two children alone while my body slowly recovered was overwhelming. I often found myself in tears during feedings and diaper changes, questioning if I could handle it all. Financial pressures forced me back to work after just 4 weeks, adding another layer of difficulty to an already challenging time.

When our third child arrived, it was a whirlwind of emotions and changes. Although I didn't have any paid leave to take a break from work, my husband was fortunate enough to get it. His support during this time made an incredible difference in our lives. He took charge of the night duties, handling feedings and diaper changes while I tried to catch up on some much-needed sleep. During the day, he shared in all the daily care activities, like bathing and dressing our daughter, so we both got to experience those special bonding moments with our daughter during those precious 12 weeks together. This arrangement didn't just allow me to spend quality time with our baby, it also gave me the chance to focus on myself and my

recovery after childbirth. With his help around the clock, I could rest and heal without feeling overwhelmed by all the responsibilities that come with a new baby in the house.

This is one of the reasons why I'm such a strong advocate for Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML). Giving real families like mine the support they need. Allowing families to truly have time to care for themselves and each other. With 70% of Mainers backing this, it's obvious we're recognizing how important PFML is for our community's health and happiness. I am urging you to stand up for Mainers and protect Paid Family Medical Leave. Thank you for the opportunity to share my story, I'm happy to answer any questions.