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Lewiston
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Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Honorable Members of the Labor Committee,

Thank you for today's opportunity. I am Elizabeth Eames, of Lewiston, here to support our existing Paid Family & Medical Leave statute. I urge you to collectively fend off the many bills so desperately designed to chip away at our upcoming benefits.

A while back, my hair turned grey overnight. I had had to drive through the wee hours of the night – in a blizzard no less – down to Mass Eye & Ear in a frantic bid to save my recently widowed and already deaf mother's suddenly failing eyesight. From the back seat, my bewildered six year old son was expressing his misery, being in the feverish throes of chicken pox.

Then a recently divorced solo-and sandwiched-parent, a tenured professor at Bates College, I was nonetheless struggling financially and indeed almost lost the house. Luckily, I am here, a bit grizzled, but housed and able to tell the tale.

The point is that no one can predict such circumstances. Everyone deserves support. Anyone could succumb to such a challenge. Indeed, too many have already done so.

When our law finally and fully kicks in, most employees in Maine will have coverage, and their hair may turn grey slowly and gracefully rather than overnight.

Employees in a dozen other states already benefit from PFML. Our Maine statute closely follows your commission's recommendations, was vetted over the course of two years, and is informed by careful actuarial study.

If any tinkering is to be done, I suggest you only accept LD894 which was proposed by the original bill's sponsors and provides minor technical changes and LD575 which accommodates employees dealing with completely unexpected emergencies such as my own. I implore you to let the system go into effect as planned.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. **I urge you to vote "Ought Not To Pass" on each of these bills, with the possible exceptions of Senate President Daughtry's LD894 and Committee Co-Chairs Tipping and Roeder's LD575.**