



Testimony of the Maine Chapter of Mother Forward

LD 406, *An Act to Repeal the Laws Providing for Paid Family and Medical Leave and to Reimburse Taxpayers*

In Opposition to LD 406

April 11, 2025

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, my name is Jade Lebel and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter of Mother Forward. I am testifying in opposition to the repeal of paid family and medical leave.

As an organization that focuses on issues that affect mothers, we were obviously overjoyed when paid family and medical leave got written into law. Without programs like these, countless mothers have had to return to work just two weeks after giving birth. Research has proven that this is extremely detrimental to maternal and infant health. In the state of Maine, even dogs are guaranteed 7 weeks with their puppies after giving birth.

The argument we have heard over and over again against paid leave, is that the tax burden is too much. People, rightfully, point out that Maine has one of the highest tax rates in the country and are concerned that continued tax hikes are going to drive young people out of the state of Maine. However, we believe that if we want to attract young people to the state of Maine, that the way we do that is by making the state of Maine attractive to young people! Paid family leave is something that will attract young people to Maine, especially young people who intend on having families.

Of course, paid family and medical leave is not only for new parents. We know that the program is written in a way to benefit all sorts of people who may need to take time off for extenuating circumstances. I want to tell you a story about my best friend. In December of 2023 she found out that her husband had stage 3 colon cancer. At the time, she was 7 months pregnant with their second child. Her husband needed surgery immediately, and then started his chemo treatment shortly after. This led both she and her husband to take lots of time off from work. Their son was born shortly after the chemo treatments began. This meant that my best friend no longer had enough sick days accumulated to take the leave that she had initially planned for. Later that year, her father, who had been diagnosed with cancer years earlier, began to decline significantly and very quickly. Ultimately, he passed away in October of last year. If my best friend had had access to paid family and medical leave at the time, she would have been able to be there to support her husband through diagnosis and treatment, she would have had adequate time to bond with her newborn, and she would have been able to be with her dad in his final weeks without having to worry about the financial burden of making any of those necessary decisions.

Paid family and medical leave is good for all Mainers, not just those who are going to be new parents. At some point in time, whether we like it or not, we will all benefit from the program. Being able to be with our loved ones when they need us most is an immeasurable gift. I've brought with me the signatures of 123 Mainers who agree. Paid family and medical leave is good for all Mainers. Please protect it.