

Testimony of Robbins Lumber, Inc.

Opposing LD 2018 (HP 1348)

“An Act to Amend the Requirements Governing Self-insurance Plans in the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program”

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Catherine Robbins-Halsted, and I am speaking on behalf of Robbins Lumber, Inc., a Maine-based manufacturing company that has operated in this state for generations. I am here to testify in opposition to LD 2018.

Robbins Lumber has a long and successful history of self-insurance. We have been self-insured for both medical benefits and workers' compensation for more than 20 years. This model has allowed us to responsibly manage costs, maintain compliance, and tailor benefits to the needs of our workforce while remaining financially stable and competitive in Maine.

When Maine enacted the Paid Family and Medical Leave law, Robbins Lumber made a good-faith decision to comply through the self-insurance route. That process was neither quick nor easy. We invested significant time, legal resources, and administrative effort to meet every requirement set by the Department of Labor. We secured our bond, filed all required documentation, and built internal systems to ensure compliance with the law as written.

LD 2018 undermines that effort.

This bill appears to penalize employers who followed the rules and invested in compliance by introducing additional restrictions on self-insurance and employer cooperation. It sends a troubling message: that even when employers fully comply with state requirements, the rules can change after the fact in ways that discourage responsible, lawful alternatives to a state-run program.

Self-insurance is not a loophole. It is a proven, regulated, and effective approach that many Maine employers have relied on for decades. Employers who choose self-insurance are not trying to avoid obligations to employees; we are choosing to meet those obligations in a way that is efficient, accountable, and cost-effective.

This bill represents unnecessary government overreach. It appears driven not by failures in self-insurance, but by concern that employers may prefer managing benefits themselves rather than using the state platform. If employers can provide equal or better benefits at lower cost while remaining compliant, that should be encouraged, not restricted.

Maine should be fostering cooperation and flexibility between employers and the state, not limiting lawful options that have worked well for both employers and employees. LD 2018 risks discouraging innovation, increasing costs, and creating uncertainty for employers who have acted responsibly and in good faith.

For these reasons, Robbins Lumber respectfully urges the Committee to oppose LD 2018.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Robbins-Halsted

Robbins Lumber, Inc.

Searsmont, Maine