



From: Carol Joyner, Executive Director
Family Values @ Work Action
Washington, DC
April 23, 2025

To: *Senator Tipping,
Representative Roeder
The Labor Committee*

Subject: Opposition to Legislative Document 1712 and Related Proposals that Gut the Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave Law

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

Thank you for providing the opportunity to add my comments today. As a long time advocate for paid family and medical leave who has contributed to many of the current care policies that exist, I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to Legislative Document 1712, which seeks to undermine the paid family and medical leave law passed in 2023. Legislative Document (LD) 1712 is not only an effort that would significantly harm the very fabric of Maine's progress towards providing essential support for working families but it will also negatively impact the national movement toward inclusive and equitable care policies.

As you are aware, employers have already begun paying contributions since January 2025, with benefits set to commence in 2026. It is disheartening to see 11 bills aimed at dismantling this crucial law before it even takes effect. While these bills vary in their scope and weaken the original intention, Legislative Document 1712 stands out for reducing the income replacement for lower wage earners, creating loopholes for employers to be exempt by claiming a broad range of hardships and excluding workers covered under a collective bargaining agreement.

The proposed changes in LD 1712 would reduce the wage replacement level, impacting low-income workers' ability to take paid time off. By capping the replacement rate at 65%, low-income workers would face a significant loss of income, making it

unaffordable for them to care for sick family members, welcome a new baby, or recover from an illness. This is particularly concerning, as lower-income workers are already struggling to make ends meet. In [California](#), the longest standing program recently increased the wage replacement levels for lower and middle income workers. The relationship between wage replacement and use is pretty clear: if you want lower wage earners to take paid leave they must receive their full, or near full pay.

Furthermore, LD 1712 would render the paid leave program voluntary by expanding the ways employers can claim hardship and opt-out of participation. This would create a patchwork system, leaving many workers without access to the care of loved ones. The United States is one of few countries in the world without a national paid leave policy. Each state that passes a policy contributes to the model that one day will be universal. Equitable delivery of benefits must be a core factor as we model quality programs and Maine's program is crucial to the national model.

Paid family and medical leave laws have been enacted in 14 states, including Washington D.C., with none being rescinded or gutted. [These laws have proven to have numerous](#) health, child development, and workplace benefits, with many states successfully expanding their programs over time.

I urge you to consider the long-term, national consequences of undermining Maine's paid family and medical leave law. This program is a vital step towards supporting working families, promoting [economic growth](#), and enhancing a state's competitiveness. I strongly oppose Legislative Document 1712 and I encourage you to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 1712 and the related bills that undermine the freedom to care.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Carol Joyner