

Chantal Longo-Guess
Trenton
LD 1273

Members of the Labor Committee,

I am writing to strongly support LD1273, An Act to Make Paid Family Leave Voluntary. The intention of the law was to provide those who want Family leave with an easy way to access it, and that's great. What is unfair about the law is that those of us who would like to opt out of the program have no option to do so. In this difficult economy, it was thrust upon us as employers that we would now have to pay 0.5% of wages for the company as we have exactly 15 employees at this time. Customers are extremely price concious right now, and the price of goods and services are higher than ever. Despite that, we have this new tax that also takes money out of our wallets. It may seem like a small amount if you look at each paycheck individually, but it adds up to be quite a bit when you look at the hit to our family income. It ends up being \$669 per year that my family now does not have available to pay the mortgage and put food on the table. Never mind that we also need that money for ever increasing property taxes and putting a child through college. I can't imagine how those who make minimum wage are faring with the decrease to their incomes.

I think the intention of the PFML law is fine for those who would like to participate, but I am unclear why this needs to be a mandatory tax, especially on top of all of the other taxes that we are currently forced to pay. It is getting overly burdensome. LD1326 seems to be the most fair solution to the problem created by forcing everyone to contibute to a program that not everyone can use. Why are we forcing people to contibute against their will? I strongly urge you to vote to allow the residents of the State of Maine the ability to choose if this is a program that could benefit them or not.

Thank you very much