

Jim Lysen
Lewiston
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Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is Jim Lysen, I live in Lewiston, and I am here to oppose all bills making changes to the PFML program in Maine.

It is past time to implement a paid leave program for all Maine workers in order to ensure that Maine families are healthy, thriving, and successful. Maine families are ready for and want a PFML program, and they deserve one. Paid family and medical leave makes workers, families, businesses and our whole economy stronger and healthier. It's time for lawmakers to deliver what Mainers so clearly support. It is affordable and possible. We can do this!

All Mainers, regardless of what they do for a living or their income, should be able to take care of themselves and a loved one in times of illness. 11 states and DC already have such legislation. Maine must be next. Benefits are proportional to how much workers earn. No one is left behind! Everyone contributes according to their ability to pay. A state PFML program would also be good for the small businesses (15 or fewer employees) who employ more than half of Maine workers, since they do not have to pay the employee premium.

My wife died of cancer in September of 2022 and I was retired and able to care for her during her subsequent (to us sudden) death. However, my daughter was still working and without a PFML policy statewide she was unclear on how to manage her time off to provide care for her Mom during what was to be her Mom's last weeks. She regrets not being with her Mom during those weeks, and the sadness still lingers with her. That, again, is NOT RIGHT!

I know there are a lot of unmet needs in this state. However, this program will pay for itself over time after one-time start-up costs, and it will allow our scant resources to go much further to better meet the needs of Mainers. Please allow Mainers to access a program that will allow them to care for themselves as well as their loved ones. It is the right thing to do!

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today.