

Katherine Pennington
Newcastle
LD 539

Statement in Support of Maine's Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

April 23, 2025

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

I am writing to you as a business owner to express my strong support for Maine's Paid Family and Medical Leave program and to urge you to oppose all the bills that threaten to delay or weaken this program.

My brother and I own the Maine Antique Digest, an antiques publication in Waldoboro founded by our parents in 1973. Our business's most valuable asset is our employees. We try to treat them fairly, and we offer as generous a benefits package as we can afford, including paid sick days and holidays, health insurance, dental reimbursement, and some assistance with child-care costs. We give time off for medical and dental appointments, and we are flexible with scheduling so that our employees can attend their children's events such as school plays and concerts.

One benefit we have never been able to afford to offer is paid family and medical leave.

Over the years we have faced several situations in which paid leave would have been tremendously helpful, both for our employees and for us as business owners. In all of these circumstances we have tried our best to accommodate the family's need by granting unpaid time off and by allowing remote work. Neither of these is a good solution for a family facing a health crisis. It also causes stress for the rest of us because we have to shoulder the burden of the missing employee's responsibilities. If paid family and medical leave had been available, our employees could have focused fully on their families, and we could have hired temporary help to lessen the impact on the rest of our staff.

Maine's Paid Family and Medical Leave program offers a sensible, affordable, and compassionate way to allow working Mainers to take the time they need to care for a family member or for their own healing. Most other countries and 12 other states in the U.S. have paid family and medical leave programs. I urge you to oppose all efforts to delay or weaken this program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Pennington
123 Academy Hill
Newcastle, ME 04553