

Ann Dodd-Collins
Portland

To Senator Craig Hickman, Representative Mike Sylvester and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Ann Dodd-Collins and I live in Portland. I am submitting testimony in favor of LD 1559 on behalf of the Anti-Racist Policy Committee of HopeGateWay Church in Portland.

Only 15% of American workers have access to any sort of paid leave, and unpaid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act isn't really an option for frontline workers and those working for minimum wage. LD 1559, "Resolve, To Create the Commission To Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program" is an opportunity to hear from workers, employers, caregivers, and experts, and to propose a system to support all workers, families, and employers in Maine.

As a mother of young children, I experienced the hardships that are caused when a child becomes ill. I was fortunate in having a job where I could take time off to care for my son. I was also fortunate in that both my husband and I had jobs which paid more than minimum wage. Nevertheless, there were bills we couldn't pay when I was caring for our child. Needed purchases went on a credit card. It took us months to get clear of our debts. I cannot imagine how dire the situation would have been if we were only working for minimum wage or if I were a single parent at that time. My heart goes out to the many parents and children who have had to choose between being able to pay their bills and caring for beloved family members.

The Paid Family & Medical Leave Commission will ensure that we don't go back to systems that weren't working before the global pandemic. If we are to move forward, we must build new systems that work for all those who live in Maine. Please support LD 1559.

Sincerely, Ann Dodd-Collins