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LD 1559: Resolve, To Create the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program

Greetings, Chairs Senator Hickman and Representative Sylvester, and members of the Joint Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Pat Pinto, and I am the Volunteer State President for AARP Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony with you today.

Today I am testifying in support of LD 1559.

AARP Maine is fighting to improve paid family leave policies for workers in Maine – especially our family caregivers who help their older loved ones remain in their homes. Across Maine, approximately 181,000 family caregivers provide critical assistance to older Mainers. Many do this while also juggling full- or part-time jobs. Unpaid family caregivers contribute more than 152 million hours of unpaid care each year, valued at about 2.2 billion dollars. They are the backbone of our care system in Maine.

Staying home when a loved one is sick shouldn't mean losing your pay, or even your job. Caring for a loved one can be expensive, stressful, and isolating. We must utilize every tool available to ensure workers in Maine – including family caregivers – have access to paid family leave.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I urge this committee to support LD 1559.

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