

South Portland
LD 1964

I am a 34 year old, first generation college graduate who completed her degree last May. Shortly after graduating I got hired for my first professional job in the research sector. While I am happy, secure, and enjoy better benefits than I've ever had access to at my job, I feel that I have to choose between it and having children. Parental leave offered by my employer means using available accrued sick/disability and/or vacation hours, something that will take me years, considering the length of employment in my current position, to maintain a reasonable length of parental leave. I am left to either put off having children to when I'm at even greater risk for complications given my age, or, quitting my job, losing my benefits, and risking obtaining coverage from public marketplace insurance and finding new work after many months without pay. This suggests that one is only fit to have a child when long established in a career and following a life path that many cannot, or struggle to, accomplish, and that bettering yourself at any point in life means missing out in others. Given Maines low birth rates and majority population of older persons, it seems that encouraging residents to have children in order to fill in these gaps would be a no brainer. It's well beyond time to stop putting women and their families in positions that discourage having children.