

Senator Tipping and Representative Roeder and the esteemed committee of Labor & Housing: My name is Hamda Ahmed, I live in Lewiston and currently work for the Office of Population Health Equity at Maine CDC. I am writing this testimony to support the creation of paid family and medical leave for Maine.

Previous to my current job, during the pandemic, I was a case manager and a program manager at New Mainers Public Health Initiative, one of the largest ethnic-based organizations in the Lewiston/Auburn area. I worked with some of the most vulnerable populations, essential workers who lived paycheck to paycheck. Some community members were severely impacted by Covid-19 and were forced to go back to work without fully recovering. Some of them lost their jobs, and others lived with the stress of being sick and fearing to lose their jobs without any income to survive.

No one deserves to be under the stress of financial burden while taking care of their health or the health of their loved ones. LD 1964 will allow workers to have up to 12 weeks of paid leave. People are working 2 or 3 jobs and still having difficulties maintaining financial stability. I believe that if this bill passes, it will help workers that do not have this opportunity yet to be more secure.

I am urging the committee to vote for this bill and give Maine workers the freedom to take care of their health and take care of their loved ones when needed.