

Carlyssa Baker
Mexico Maine
LD 1964

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing,

My name is Carly Baker and I live in Mexico, Maine. I write today in support of LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program.

It is with great excitement that I have recently learned that LD 1964 has been announced. For over a year now, I have been involved in powerful conversations with folks about the importance and impact of having a secure Paid Family and Medical Leave system. Health related issues and major life changes leave families unable to afford to care for themselves and loved ones while supporting themselves financially.

When I was twelve, my parents purchased a small general store in Roxbury, and we moved to Maine. Shortly after our move my dad was diagnosed with cancer. Because my father was self-employed, he was unable to access paid leave and he found himself undergoing a series of intense medical procedures and appointments while running a store alongside my mom. Since then, I've talked with friends and others around the state and I've learned that my family's story is not unique. I'll be graduating from Mountain Valley High School in Rumford in a month and it's shocked me to learn that so many of my friends have also needed extended time off to care for themselves or their family members.

If this bill is passed, it will provide families like mine with flexibility in times of hardship to be able to care for themselves, break down barriers along racial and gender lines by providing those most affected with the resources they need, and provide small businesses with the funds to take part in paid leave. Thousands of families in Maine suffer because our state doesn't have a comprehensive paid family and medical leave system. All people deserve to be able to have paid time off when we need it, whether that's because of welcoming a new baby, or because they need cancer treatment, or any other reason.

It has been analyzed in recent years that 70% of Mainers feel it is time to implement a Paid Family and Medical Leave system. The numbers do not lie, it is clear that there is overwhelming support for this bill. Therefore, I urge the committee to support LD 1964. Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue.