

Kate Beever
Maine Music & Health
LD 1964

Testimony In Support of LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program

Kate Beever
Portland, ME 04101

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

My name is Kate Beever and I live in Portland. I am here today in support of paid family and medical leave for Maine.

I am a medical music therapist with an office in South Portland, and I work half of the week at Maine Medical Center. In my 12 years as a clinician, I have worked with families all over the state- from York Hospital to Reddington Fairview to New Sweden. Clients come to music therapy to regain speech, mobility, and quality of life after an injury, accident, or newly diagnosed illness. These include traumatic brain injuries, Parkinson's Disease, dementia, and cancer. Patients' goals are medical-physical and cognitive- but they are also trying to manage the emotional affects of huge changes in their bodies and lives. Families are often in shock, trying to navigate the financial and logistical issues of hospitalization while worrying about their loved one.

The themes we see over and over at bedside are stress and worry about the patient's recovery, as well as the financial impact of medical needs. On top of growing medical bills, caregivers are taking time off from work to be at bedside, figure out next steps, and then be at home when the patient is discharged to help with the transition and provide care at home. We have a shortage of affordable in-home care workers and rehab facilities, so parents or adult children of patients are learning how to handle things like a tracheostomy at home and prevent further injury that would re-admit their family member. This is an incredible level of stress, added to by knowing that "vacation" days are running short as they're being used for caregiving.

If LD1964 passes, families will have a chance to get through one of the most difficult experiences in life- physical disabilities brought on by accidents, illnesses, and aging. They can make that transition home, have the space to breathe and find resources, without losing the income that is so necessary for survival.

I hope you will support LD 1964.

Sincerely,

Kate Beever, MA, MT-BC