

Julie Bourgeois
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LD 1964

My name is Julie Bourgeois and I'm from Gray, 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.

I recently had to take an extended leave to care for my father during his final stages with Parkinson's disease. Caring for my dad was the most fulfilling thing I have ever done in my life, but it was also the most challenging. I was able to take advantage of a week-long paid leave program offered by my employer, and I was also incredibly lucky to be in a financial position to afford taking 2 additional weeks off, unpaid. I'm so grateful that I did not have to choose between my family and my work, but unfortunately my situation is not the norm. Most Mainers are forced to choose - do they take unpaid leave to care for themselves or their loved ones, or do they continue to work to keep up with their finances. This is a heartbreaking decision, and it's completely avoidable if Maine enacts a paid leave program. Workers need to be able to take the time off to care for their families without fearing job loss, so it's important to make sure that job protections are a strong part of the bill. Therefore, I ask the committee to support LD 1964. Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue.