

Rachel Bouttenot
Bath, ME
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

Rachel Bouttenot
Bath, Maine
May 22, 2023

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

My name is Rachel Bouttenot and I live in Bath. I am writing to fully support paid family and medical leave for Maine.

I just had my second child in October 2022. Having time off after giving birth is absolutely essential to bonding with the baby and being able to be present for the entire family. Giving birth and the weeks afterwards are really physically intense and full of hormonal changes. I cannot imagine trying to return to work while recovering from labor and while taking care of a newborn around the clock (with very little sleep).

All parents should be granted at least 12 paid weeks of leave. At least! Ideally, more like 6-9, or even 12, months. Having a baby is hard! Babies need lots of care and attention. Imagine the impact on our children if their parents could actually attend to their needs for months rather than days or weeks following their birth. Plus, the birth parent should be given all the time and resources to breast/chest feed the baby. Since breast milk should ideally be the only source of nutrition for the first six months, that entire time should be paid leave. Returning to work puts the breastfeeding relationship in jeopardy, which can have major negative effects on the health and wellbeing of the baby.

The cost/benefit analysis of paid family leave is clear: allowing parents to stay home during this critical time means fewer healthcare and educational costs as well as greater productivity and economic contributions by the parents.

We hope you will support LD 1964. Thank you for listening, I'm happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
Rachel Bouttenot