

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

The prospect of getting Maine people paid family leave is a very noble and needed endeavor. If enacted and implemented properly would be a great way to attract qualified workers from other states. This bill and the way that it goes about it will hurt Maine businesses. The labor market in Maine is strained and enacting this legislation as it is written will strain it exponentially. There needs to be more controls around how the employee qualifies for leave to include tighter restrictions on family definitions, how long the employee has been employed, and what needs to be provided to the employer as proof for the need to take leave. As it is written, this bill is ripe for abuse. Maine businesses can ill afford to have multiple employees on leave for 3 months without any resources to add or replace workers to perform and maintain the current workload.

Additionally, adding an additional tax expense to Maine businesses will put more small businesses at risk of failure and/or contribute to an already exorbitant increase in inflation as prices for goods and services will need to be increased. One suggestion is to have an employee payroll contribution like a few other states have (Oregon is 60% Employee, 40% Employer) so that the employees have some skin in the game.

Paid family leave is needed, but Maine businesses should not have to bear the full cost with little control over how it operates.