

**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**

Nora Flaherty
Portland, ME
May 25, 2023

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

My name is Nora Flaherty and I live in Portland. I am testifying in support of Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) for Maine.

When I had my daughter, everything went smoothly. But even after the “simple” birth, I struggled. I was bleeding constantly, had to take constant care against infection, and was physically exhausted. And like about one in seven women, I experienced postpartum depression that made me unable to function on any but the most basic level.

I was incredibly lucky: My job offered 12 weeks of paid parental leave. But many have to return to work almost immediately, even after complicated births and with postpartum depression. Others I know have had to take major financial hits to care for themselves or a sick family member.

We can all agree that’s not right. Everyone, no matter how much they make or what they do for a living, should be able to take care of themselves or a loved one without going into debt, risking their job or housing, or making other terrible tradeoffs.

Most of us will need paid family leave at some point – but the majority of Mainers don’t have access. It doesn’t have to be that way. Passing and funding LD 1964 would mean hundreds of thousands of Mainers could put their families first without having to choose between paying their bills and taking care of themselves or someone they love.

We need a comprehensive PFML program that allows *all* workers, not just a few, to take the time we need to care for ourselves and our families without losing everything we’ve worked so hard to build.

I respectfully urge you to vote yes on LD 1964. Thank you.