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The ability to take parental leave after the birth of my daughter in 2022 was essential, but also the product of a number of privileges not all Mainers share. I was eligible for FMLA, had built up sick time that I could use for maternity leave, and had a spouse whose job was able to support us during the weeks of my leave that were unpaid. Without these privileges, I might have been back at work within a matter of weeks, like so many postpartum parents. I would likely have missed out on having the feeding support I needed when breastfeeding was challenging, missed out on the therapy I needed to combat postpartum depression, and missed out on those glorious, impossible first months with my first child. I remember turning to my husband on the day my daughter turned 6 weeks old and asking, "Can you believe there are people having to go back to work right now?" The idea was horrifying. I urge this committee to develop a paid leave program to ensure that both new mothers and our youngest Mainers have the love and structure they need to thrive in the tenuous and challenging weeks after birth.