

Gary Friedmann
Bar Harbor
LD 1964

Gary Friedmann
Testimony in Support of LD 1964
Joint Committee on Labor & Housing
Public Hearing: May 25, 2023

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gary Friedmann and I live in Bar Harbor, where I own an organic vegetable farm with my wife and another partner. We would like to voice our support for LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program.

On our farm, we employ three full-time staff for eight months, with an additional four to five part-time employees at the height of our season. As a small business, we truly value our employees, but we cannot provide private paid family and medical leave benefits because we simply do not have the capital, nor the volume of employees to afford a private policy that provides the support that we and our employees need.

Most people, at some point in their lives, will experience a major medical issue or life event that will require them to take extended time away from their jobs or businesses, such as a surgery or the birth of a child. And many people will experience having to provide care to a loved one such as supporting a spouse through cancer treatments or providing end-of-life care to an aging parent. Events like these are a part of life but without access to paid leave, many people are faced with very difficult choices between taking care of themselves or family, and losing their income, job, or business.

One of our full-time employees is having a baby this fall. We are really stretching to give her six weeks of paid time off, but this essentially means the rest of the crew has to cover her responsibilities. We simply cannot afford to pay her time off and hire another person after she leaves to care for her child.

A state paid family and medical leave program will provide small business owners and their employees with much-needed flexibility and financial security to deal with major life events without putting their livelihoods or businesses in jeopardy.

Please vote to support LD 1964 to establish a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program – Maine's small business owners and working families need stability. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gary and Glenon Friedmann, Partners
Rose Avenia, Partner
Bar Harbor Farm