

Miriam A. Johnson  
Bath, ME

May 25, 2023

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

My name is Miriam Johnson and I live in Bath, Maine. I write today in support of LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program.

In May of 2012, I got a phone call that changed my life entirely. A social worker called and said that a baby had been born a week earlier in the Dover Foxcroft area and his mother was making the difficult choice to place him for adoption. Would my husband and I become his parents? And could we be in Dexter to pick him up in less than 24 hours? We went out that evening and bought a car seat, formula, some bottles, a package of diapers, and a half dozen onesies. And, voila, the next day we became parents. One of the reasons why I knew I could say “yes” so easily is that I knew that my employer offered some form of paid family leave. Although my workplace did not have a formal policy at the time, I am proud that my employer has since recognized the value of having a predictable paid leave policy that people can rely on and plan around.

I didn't give birth to my son, so I can't speak to the experience of recovering from labor and delivery at the same time as navigating the needs of a newborn, but I can say this: navigating the needs of a newborn who is too young to go to day care is a full-time job. I understand that one in four women in the U.S. takes eleven or fewer days of parental leave after having a baby. I am thankful that I had paid leave that allowed me to bond with my newborn and wish the same for other Maine parents, particularly lower wage earners who are more typically working jobs that do not provide any sort of paid leave.

Just as my adoption came as a bit of a surprise to my family, Maine workers can not always predict when they may face a life cycle event such as a birth, illness, or death, but those events are all likely over the course of a lifetime. I urge this committee to support LD 1964 so that all Maine workers may face these stressful events – whether they are joyful or difficult – with the support they deserve. Thank you for your time and careful consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,



Miriam A. Johnson