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I write in support of paid family and medical leave for the citizens of Maine, speaking on my own behalf and not as a representative of my employer. My position is influenced by my role as a mother, having had two children over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a physician. Fortunately my position did allow me to have partially paid leave (via short term disability) after two Caesarian section births and the subsequent recovery, and my husband's employer similarly afforded him paid family leave. Our children benefitted greatly from this - there is clear data supporting better childhood (and maternal) health outcomes when parents are able to be at home in the early weeks of infancy. However, for so many people including many of my patients, there is no resource for paid family or medical leave, and it is not financially viable to have time away from work without that benefit in place. I have many, many times seen patients make decisions about returning to work when it is not medically advisable because they simply have no other choice. There are significant physical and emotional health ramifications to these decisions, and there is an increased risk of medical or psychiatric complication, re-injury, etc. While there is an economic cost to paid family and medical leave, there are also economic and societal downsides to returning to work too quickly, including the need for future missed work or withdrawal from the workforce entirely. In particular, the benefits of paid parental leave on children, our most vulnerable citizens, is clear, and offering paid family and medical leave is an opportunity to help children get a healthy start to life.