

Helen Lukacs  
Alfred  
LD 1964

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

My name is Helen Lukacs and I live in Alfred, Maine. I am writing today to ask you to support LD 1964 and create an inclusive Paid Family and Medical Leave program for Maine.

My son was born in April of 2020, about one month after the world shut down due to the COVID pandemic. The pandemic made everything harder- but I was lucky enough to be employed somewhere with paid maternity leave. My husband, however, is self-employed as a carpenter. He could not afford to take a ton of unpaid time off of work and had budgeted to take a week off. But then the pandemic shut everything down anyways. He ended up with three weeks of paid time off -through pandemic unemployment- to spend with his new family.

It is a sad day when you need a pandemic to be able to afford to stay home with your newborn. I urge you to pass a Paid Family and Medical Leave bill that includes an option for self-employed Mainers to opt-in. This would greatly help the many families like mine where one or both of the parents are self-employed.

Additionally, we know that the work of caring for family and home is largely unpaid labor done by women. A Paid Family and Medical Leave program that is available to all is a great step towards valuing that care work. There are many folks in Maine who work independently, as carpenters, farmers, masons, plumbers, painters, etc. Including these folks in the Paid Leave program allows them to more easily care for their loved ones and to participate more fully in their families.

I encourage this committee to support Paid Family and Medical Leave here in Maine and to include self-employed Mainers.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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