

May 25, 2023

Testimony in support of Paid Family Medical Leave – LD 1964.

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

My name is Dr. Erica Magnus and I live in Windham. For almost a decade, I was a family caregiver for my mother in the home I share with my wife.

I am writing to urge your support of LD 1964, *An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family Medical Leave Benefits Program*.

We all know that life can be tumultuous at times. Anything can happen and at those moments our loved ones help us get through. This is especially true for family caregivers; individuals who help their loved ones with everyday tasks or even with complex medical assistance. Every day, millions of Americans just like me help their parents, spouses and other loved ones live independently at home — where they want to be.

My mother was adamant about staying at home and I would not have had it any other way. When caregiving tasks became more and more intense as my mother aged, we learned to do things we never thought we would do! We learned how to safely change bed linens with someone still in the bed. We administered medications and learned how to safely transition my mother from her bed, to a chair, to a toilet and back again.

As is the case with many caregivers in Maine, at the same time my mother started to need care at home, I was working part-time as a university professor. Ultimately, I made the decision to stop working because I simply could not manage both jobs – teaching and caregiving – at the same time. Something had to give. Although I gladly took on my role as a caregiver, I had worked hard to earn my Ph.D. and was saddened to put my career on hold. This situation put a lot of pressure on me, as well as on my family, but my wife and I agreed it was the necessary step to take.

We didn't realize then the long-term financial toll my time out of the workforce would take.

I urge you to support a Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) program for Maine through LD 1964. PFML allows for prolonged absences from work that can be used in a variety of situations, without sacrificing one's livelihood. Had this program been in place when I was caregiving, it would have been a welcome option for me during a very challenging time for my family.

Dr. Erica W. Magnus  
Windham