Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Pamela Morin, and I am the Executive Director of Family Violence Project, the domestic violence resource center serving and supporting survivors of domestic abuse and violence in Kennebec and Somerset Counties. On behalf of our organization and the survivors we serve, I urge you to support paid safe leave for survivors of domestic abuse and violence in Maine.

Safe leave would be so impactful for the survivors that work with Family Violence Project. One survivor we have worked with recently is employed by a local, small retail store. Her employers are understanding about her situation. And, in compliance with current law, they have given her and will continue to give her days off to deal with what she has to deal with to keep her and her daughter safe. However, she does not get time off with pay, and she can only take the time if she finds her own shift coverage. This survivor is a crime victim whose abuser of ten years "evicted" her from their shared residence while he was in jail for bail violation. She had only 30 days to relocate. She and her daughter found a place to move into, but she couldn't afford enough time off to completely move out of the complex. If she had had safe leave coverage, she might have been able to expeditiously complete the move out without having to work around her work schedule. As it is now, many of her possessions remain at the abuser's home, including social security numbers for herself and her children. He had sworn to make her life a living hell if she ever called the police and she feared that he will throw away everything of hers. This is only one recent example, but reflective of the experience of so many survivors we work with.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for universal paid family leave and, in particular, the ability of survivors to have paid leave while they accomplish the tasks essential to keeping them and their children safe.