

**TESTIMONY OF
Brian Parke
L.D. 1964, “An Act to Implement the
Recommendations of the Commission to
Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave
Benefits Program”**



Good afternoon, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Brian Parke and I am the President and CEO of the Maine Motor Transport Association and a resident of Brunswick. The Association is comprised of more than 1,700 member companies, whose employees make up a large portion of the 34,000 people who make their living in the trucking industry in Maine.

I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 1964 due to the increased costs on Maine employees and employers, the detrimental impact on Maine businesses competing regionally and nationally, and because it would intensify an already challenging workforce shortage felt by the trucking industry and other blue-collar industries in our state.

MMA would like to add its voice to the chorus of others objecting to this bill by adopting many of the practical objections that have been outlined. But we would also like to remind the committee of the recent supply chain crisis that was at least in large part caused by a workforce shortage at our ports. Will adopting a mandatory paid family and medical leave in Maine create shortages of baby formula, toilet paper, electronics and semi-conductors like what happened in the recent supply chain crisis? Maybe not. But creating a program that offers significant amounts of paid time off will certainly make staffing an effective and predictable distribution network more difficult, it will make it less efficient and more prone to complications that will have real world consequences. Maine has a serious shortage of truck drivers now. Passing LD 1964 will make it worse.

While the emotional appeals from those advocating for paid FML should not be minimized, there may be ways to go about implementing a version of this bill that we might be more inclined to support. If it was purely voluntary, or if a paid component was added to Maine's existing FML law, we might feel differently about it. But with the study commission's findings,

the published bill, the printed amendments and the conceptual amendments being thrown around – all of this is a moving target that makes our support impossible.

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee has now or at the Work Session.