

**Statement in Support of LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the  
Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program**

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123 Academy Hill  
Newcastle, ME 04553  
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Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing,

I am writing to you as a business owner to urge you to support LD 1964.

My brother and I own the Maine Antique Digest, an antiques publication in Waldoboro founded by our parents in 1973. We currently have 9 full-time and 5 part-time employees.

Our business's most valuable asset is our employees. We try to treat them fairly, and we offer as generous a benefits package as we can afford, including paid sick days and holidays, health insurance, dental reimbursement, and some assistance with child-care costs. We give time off for medical and dental appointments, and we are flexible with scheduling so that our employees can attend their children's events such as school plays and concerts.

One benefit we have never been able to afford to offer is paid family and medical leave.

Last year we had a situation in which paid leave would have been tremendously helpful. The daughter of one of our employees had her first baby, and her husband had to go back to work almost immediately. Our employee arranged to take her few remaining vacation days to stay with her daughter, who lives over two hours away. It quickly became clear that the new mother was overwhelmed. Her doctor diagnosed postpartum depression and said that the new mother should not be left alone with her baby until she was feeling better. Our employee could not have afforded to take an unpaid leave of absence. We agreed to allow her to work remotely for three weeks so she could help with the baby and make sure her daughter got to her medical appointments. It was stressful for our employee, who was juggling the difficulties of working remotely with the challenges of caring for her daughter and new grandchild. It was stressful for the new mother, who really needed full-time support. And it was stressful for our company because our employee was not able to carry a full workload despite her best intentions.

If paid family and medical leave had been available last year, our employee could have stayed with her daughter for an extended time and been able to focus fully on caring for her and the baby without trying to work or worrying about losing income, and we could have hired temporary help to lessen the burden on the rest of our staff. Mother and baby are doing fine now, but it was a very rough start that would have been so much easier with paid leave.

LD 1964 offers a sensible, affordable, and compassionate way to allow working Mainers to take the time they need to care for a family member or for their own healing. Most other countries

and 11 states in the U.S. have paid family and medical leave programs. I hope Maine will be the next state to join the list.

Please support LD 1964. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Pennington