

Dr. Christopher Pezzullo
South Portland, ME
May 25, 2023

My name is Christopher Pezzullo, and I am a pediatrician who lives in South Portland, Maine. I write today in support of LD 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program.

As a pediatrician, I am continually dismayed at the short time period new moms and dads have with their newborn babies. As a concerned clinician, I know that the bond formed between a baby and its parents is forged in the first year of life. The stress and separation for child and parents that comes from early parental return to work is one that Maine should be able to assist with. I am amazed that those parents fortunate enough to work locally for TD BankNorth—a Canadian company—are able to have 3 months paid leave and an additional 3 months unpaid—because that is how Canada takes care of its citizens. We can do better! These young families are the future of our country. We must stop being so short-sighted and look to improving our future!

Here are some facts I've gleaned about this issue:

- 25% of new moms return to work in the first postpartum month
- Mainers live in overwhelmingly rural situations and have an even more acute need for paid leave as they have longer waits and must travel further distances for their care
- Nearby states have instituted paid leave; their small businesses support it, and furthermore will attract new individuals to our state

As a trauma informed pediatrician, I know this law could assist in reducing the overwhelming stress for young families, thereby reducing the potential and future trauma for children in our state.

I urge the committee to support LD 1964. Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue. I would be happy to discuss this with you further.

Christopher Pezzullo, DO
South Portland ME

References

Fahle, S. F., & McGarry, K. M. (2018). *Women Working Longer: Increased Employment at Older Ages*. University of Chicago Press.

Center for American Progress, Glynn, S. J. G., & Corley, D. C. (2016, September). *The Cost of Work-Family Policy Inaction*.

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<https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/workforce/small-businesses-support-paid-family-leave-programs>

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