

Webster Reed
Bangor
LD 1964

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

Webster Reed
Bangor, ME
May 24, 2023

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

My name is Webster Reed and I live in Bangor. I am writing in support of paid family medical leave for Maine.

As a former employee of a small business in Maine, I witnessed firsthand the incredible challenges faced by individuals who are unable to take time off work to care for their loved ones during critical moments. I want to share my story to emphasize the urgent need for paid family medical leave in our state and the profound impact it can have on families facing unimaginable circumstances.

Several years ago, my mother was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer. The news devastated our family, and we knew that the time we had left with her was limited. It was an emotionally tumultuous period, filled with doctor's appointments, hospital visits, and the constant worry about her well-being.

As the primary caregiver, I felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility to be by her side and provide the support she needed during this challenging journey. However, my commitment to my job and the financial strain that taking time off would impose on my family made it nearly impossible for me to be there for her as much as I wanted to be.

Without a paid family medical leave policy in place, I had to make an agonizing choice between caring for my terminally ill mother and maintaining my livelihood. I had to juggle work responsibilities while constantly worrying about my mother's deteriorating condition. The stress and guilt of not being able to fully support her during those precious moments were immeasurable.

Maine needs paid family medical leave to alleviate the burden placed on individuals like me who are torn between work and caring for their loved ones. A paid family medical leave program would provide financial assistance and job protection, ensuring that employees can take the time they need to be with their families during life-altering moments without sacrificing their income or job security.

By implementing paid family medical leave, Maine can join the ranks of states that recognize the importance of supporting their citizens during times of immense personal difficulty. It would not only benefit employees and their families but also contribute to a more compassionate and equitable society.

By passing this bill, you would not only provide financial relief but also offer emotional support and peace of mind to families going through trying times. It would allow individuals to focus on what truly matters – the well-being of their loved ones – without the constant worry of losing their job or struggling to make ends meet.

As a state, Maine has always valued the importance of community and compassion. By passing LD 1964, we can live up to these values and demonstrate our commitment to the well-being of our citizens. I urge lawmakers, employers, and fellow community members to support and advocate for paid family medical leave in Maine, ensuring that no one has to face the heartbreaking choice between work and caring for their loved ones in their greatest time of need.

I hope you will support LD 1964. Thank you for taking the time to read about my experience and for your consideration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Webster Reed