



May 25, 2023

Senator Michael Tipping, Chair
Representative Amy Roeder, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
Cross Office Building, Room 202
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: L.D. 1964, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Develop a Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program

Dear Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing;

My name is Sara Squires and I am the Public Policy Director for Disability Rights Maine (DRM), Maine's Protection and Advocacy agency for people with disabilities. On behalf of DRM, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of LD 1964.

DRM understands all too well the challenges people face when attempting to balance the care of a loved one with a disability with maintaining economic stability. Whether you are the parent or child of someone with a disability or that person is you, taking time away from work can be stressful, both emotionally and economically.

While some individuals have understanding employers or access to generous leave time that enables them to attain this balance a little more easily, this is unfortunately not the situation for many individuals across Maine. Taking time off work to meet your own medical needs or those of a loved one can often mean a loss of income, forcing difficult financial choices to be made. Individuals should not have to choose between caring for themselves or their loved ones and earning a paycheck.

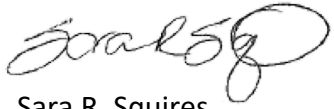
Everyone should have access to paid family leave, and this bill provides a way for individuals to focus on what matters most when health care needs arise. We urge the Committee to vote ought to pass on this important legislation because Maine citizens should never have to choose between their health or the health of a loved one and their economic security.

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MAINE'S PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY AGENCY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara R. Squires". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sara" being more prominent and the last name "Squires" following in a similar style.

Sara R. Squires
Public Policy Director
Disability Rights Maine