

Andrew Stewart
Phippsburg
LD 1964

I am Andrew Stewart of Lisa-Marie's Made In Maine, Inc. We have locations in Bath and Portland. We employ between 17 and 23 employees depending on the seasonal changes in store traffic.

I am opposed to passing LD 1964.

Doing business in Maine is expensive already. Adding a Family Medical Leave Act to list the list of expenses will be a burden to both employers and employees. My conservative estimate is that the company will have to carry additional costs of more than \$4,000 annually.

I also believe that the initial costs are just the start up costs and that, if implemented, the program and its administrative bureaucracy will come up with justification to expand and cost more over time.

This is happening as we are entering a period of inflation with energy and material costs already biting into the overhead budget.

From the employee's perspective, I believe that most, given the choice, would rather have the money in their pocket than in supporting a state-run insurance administration.

The requirement that we hold positions open for 12 weeks will make a difficult staffing situation harder to navigate. For a business of our size, we would be just over the 15-person threshold. I can tell you from experience that asking fellow employees to fill the void with additional hours while someone is out causes frustration and they leave making the absence worse.

Finding employees at every level of the job market is extremely difficult now and it doesn't look like there is any improvement in sight. Employers like us would rather have the resources to increase compensation for current and prospective employees. In the end it is compensation and work environment that will drive the employees' decision to sign on or stay with a company.

Thank you for your time,

Andrew Stewart

Lisa-Marie's Made in Maine, Inc.