

Melissa Yosua-Davis  
Chebeague Island  
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

Melissa Yosua-Davis  
Chebeague Island, Maine

May 25, 2023

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

My name is Melissa Yosua-Davis and I live on Chebeague Island. I am writing in support of paid family and medical leave for Maine.

I was fortunate that my employer granted me 12 weeks of paid parental leave each time I had my first two children, even though I was only working part-time. It was meaningful to be able to adjust to a new rhythm of life, first as a new parent, and second as a parent to two children. My spouse's work at the time allowed him to be flexible in terms of his hours, and so while he did not get leave in the same way I did, his jobs allowed him to be available as a support and fully-involved parent. It was a huge relief knowing that we did not have to forgo any income while we were learning how to be a family, figuring out how to care for a newborn and manage a toddler, and keeping up with the many needs and doctor's appointments that are part of a baby's first few months of life.

Family leave isn't just important for people who give birth; it is important for any parent welcoming a new child into their family. While much of the focus of conversation around family leave centers around women and children, households benefit from men taking family leave as well. A US Department of Labor Policy Brief on Paternity Leave notes that longer paternity leaves lead to increased engagement and bonding from fathers, which is associated with increased health and development outcomes for children. Having family leave available for both sets of parents allows for families to navigate work-life balance in a way that works best for the household.

Currently my husband and I are expecting our third child, due in early June. I'm glad that he will receive some paid family leave from his employer and that he is able to structure his return to work in a way that he can be a support for me and present to our children as we navigate life as a family of five for the first time. It is my hope that all families in Maine will have the ability to focus on this crucial time in the life of children and parents without the added stress of lost income.

We hope you will support LD 1964. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Yosua-Davis