

# LD 1410: AN ACT TO CREATE PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE BENEFITS

Workers are the *most* important resource to any Maine business.

Yet, too often, those workers are faced with an impossible decision: between providing for their families or taking time away from their workplace to care for them.

A Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program in Maine will ensure employees have the ability to care for themselves or a loved-one—whether surrounding the birth of a child or caring for an aging parent—and still be able to make ends meet.


**1**

## A UNIVERSAL BENEFIT

LD 1410 creates a universal benefit program. All workers in Maine—rural, urban, self-employed, public or private sector—are eligible to take paid leave to care for their families or themselves, and all employees contribute to the newly created fund through a small payroll deduction. To qualify to receive this benefit, an employee must have paid into the fund for at least 26 weeks in the previous year. Benefits are based on the employee's wages and are capped at the state's Average Weekly Wage (AWW). The first \$12,000 of a worker's annual wages are exempt from payroll deduction.

**2**

## CARE FOR YOUR FAMILY

The PFML program offers two different benefits—family leave and medical leave.

A qualifying employee may take *family* leave for up to 12 weeks to care for a member of their family, e.g. after the birth of a child or to tend to an ill parent or spouse. Family members include children, parents, grandparents, siblings, and spouses (in accordance with existing statute).

**3**

## CARE FOR YOURSELF

A qualifying employee may take medical leave for up to 20 weeks to address a personal medical issue, as certified by their physician.

**4**

## EMPLOYEE FUNDED

Benefits and administrative costs are paid for by employee contributions. There is no mandatory contribution from employers or from the state of Maine. The state, however, will fund the start-up costs of implementation.

**5**

## FLEXIBILITY FOR EMPLOYERS

Some Maine businesses and unions already offer paid family leave plans as a benefit to their employees. These private plans would be unaffected by LD 1410, and businesses and unions would continue to be free to design and offer plans that suit their, and their employees, needs.

**6**

## DESIGNED WITH FAIRNESS IN MIND

The first \$12,000 of a worker's income is exempt from paying into the fund, and the policy uses a progressive payout structure to ensure that Maine's lower income workers can afford to take family or medical leave when they need to.

An employee receives a weekly benefit equal to 90% of the portion of their wages which are less than 50% of the state AWW, and 67% of the portion over 50% of AWW. The total benefit is capped at the AWW.

**7**

## BROAD COALITION OF SUPPORT

This bill is supported by a broad coalition of stakeholders, including the Maine Women's Lobby, Alzheimer's Association, MECEP, Planned Parenthood, MECASA, MCEDV, Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition, Maine Family Planning, Maine Employment Lawyers Association, New Ventures Maine, Maine Children's Alliance, Maine Council on Aging, Maine Equal Justice Partners, and the Portland Catholic Diocese.