



To Representative Janet Ancel and Members of The House Committee on Ways & Means:

As the CEO of Mamava – a women-owned company that designs lactation suites for moms to pump or nurse – I support public policies that support mamas-on-the-go, and a statewide family and medical leave insurance program is right in line with that. This program would be a support for Vermont's small businesses as much as it would for their employees.

Vermont's economy is built on stable, tight-knit communities, and thriving small businesses. I chose to start my business here because of these values, but we need to do a better job of encouraging this entrepreneurial spirit through good policies.

It can be difficult and costly for small businesses to offer robust benefit packages to recruit and retain good employees. Mamava has prioritized providing 12 weeks of paid parental leave to our employees, an important commitment that is extremely challenging for a start-up. (Two of our 10 full-time employees are expecting babies in May.) Creating a statewide family and medical leave insurance program will remove the financial barrier that so many employers can't surmount and give all employees access to family or medical leave when they need it.

It costs us \$786 each month -- 1.831% of our payroll -- to provide a robust 12-week leave policy to our employees. If this bill were to pass, we would exercise the employer option to contribute and pick up **half** of the .93% payroll deduction, which will save us quite a bit of money. In fact, it would cost only about half as much for us to pay the full premium cost of the proposed statewide insurance pool -- just \$399.13 per month. For a business like mine, that has made a commitment to live its values, a statewide family and medical leave insurance program would be a huge support, as I know it would be to so many other small business that have not been able to finance a private program but would like to.

Both Vermont small businesses and Vermonters want to grow our local economy, keep Vermonters in state, and attract more families to move here. A statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program would benefit both employees and their employers while also ensuring the long-term health of our families, communities, and economy.

Sincerely,

Sascha Mayer
Co-Founder and CEO of Mamava