

To: Senator Sirotkin & the Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs

From: Eric Sorkin, Co-Owner of Runamok Maple in Cambridge

The Paid Family and Medical Leave bill is, in my opinion, an incredible no-brainer.

We have about 35 employees, and in the past year have worked with roughly six different people to manage absences due to family deaths, medical emergencies, mental health issues and births. In every situation, our employees were concerned about wage replacement and job security. In each case we were able to work it out and meet these needs, but for a business our size, it is a struggle, and the costs are felt directly and invariably impact our growth.

Put simply: passing this bill would fix this significant issue at nominal cost, and put Vermont in the vanguard with respect to competing for employees.

I fully support H.196 and I supported the bill fully in its original form.

As your committee discusses amending the bill, I hope you will consider reinstating the personal illness/injury time. There is a significant need for this type of leave, and not all businesses offer temporary disability insurance - especially small businesses. Without the inclusion of leave for this purpose, we continue to run the risk of financial hardship for Vermont workers when an unexpected challenging life event arises.

I understand that as the committee restores certain components of the bill, there will be an overall program cost increase. Should you decide to shift back to joint-funding, we support that as well.

Thank you for your time.