

Testimony of Stacie Archibald
Owner, Lead Teacher Your Little Artist Preschool

In support of LD 258, "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025"

(Governor's Bill) Sponsored by Representative Melanie Sachs

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and the Joint Standing Committee on on Health and Human Services

Tuesday, February 21, 2023, State House Room 228

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, members of the Health and Human Services, my name is Stacie Archibald, I am an owner of a Nationally Accredited NAFCC, Step 4 QRIS family childcare in South Portland, Maine.

Initiative: Provides funding to annualize funds received in Public Law 2021, chapter 635 for salary supplements awarded to individuals who provide childcare or are early childhood educators.

I'm testifying to support the salary supplement investments for early childhood educators working in child care programs. I'm also asking for you to increase the investments in this salary supplement program.

Since the start of my career in 2005 we have been told that the field of Early Childhood Education and care is the backbone of the economy, individual families financial security, their career progress and the critical brain development in the most sensitive years of learning. Providers in this field have been personally subsidizing through their low wages while directly caring for children and volunteer hours to meet the mounting licensing and training requirements for too long. Entered the field of ECE is akin to a life of charity work which is a struggle for those of us who have our own families & financial obligations and is driving the exiting from this field in record numbers.

We are a critical point in this essential field where the closings and retirement of childcare providers are far surpassing the replacement rate.

Even in higher paying programs such as mine a rate of \$18-\$25/hr is barely justifiable when much easier work can be done in other jobs with similar pay without the exposure to illness, lifting, bending, emotional stress, lack of health insurance, often long hours and lack of respect found in Early Ed.

Families cannot afford to pay higher childcare rates to pay the the unparalleled commitment of the workforce who care for their children. Many are choosing unlicensed care, quitting their jobs or piecing care together with inconsistent care, friends and family which offers a safe temporary option but may not need the developmental needs of young children.

Early childhood education & care encompasses family childcare, center based and public programs and without a sustainable budget plan to include the financing of ALL Maine will continue to struggle to retain workforce in this field and all the other fields supported by it.

Later this session there will be a bill to propose increases to the salary supplement program and I ask you to support these measures to help save child care in the state of Maine.

Thank you,

Stacie