

Danielle Gorman  
Portland  
LD 258

Testimony of Danielle Gorman  
Early Childhood Program Coordinator of Breakwater School

Neither for Nor Against 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 Danielle Gorman, and I am the Early Childhood Program Coordinator for Breakwater School in 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.

One of the most important components for high quality early care and education is consistency of care over years, not months, of a child's life. We need providers that cultivate relationships with children and their families as they grow and develop. These providers also need to be experienced and educated in early care and education. Salaries remain too low to foster a well experienced and educated workforce. Early care and education become a transient profession because it is so difficult to make a secure living. Every year, we lose talented young teachers to other fields, even just elementary education, for the primary reason that they can make more money.

This means children do not have consistent care. They are having to adjust to a steady stream of new faces. Strong relationships are impossible in these scenarios.

As a long time professional in this field with decades of experience, even today, I couldn't provide for my family without the much larger income of my husband - and we live in a 1400 square foot house in Westbrook and drive two very old cars. My daughter, a bright and talented young woman, studying at Mount Holyoke, has a gift for working with young children, and I haven't encouraged her to continue because I know she wants to be financially independent.

By increasing the stipend for early childhood educators - you will help to make early care and education a valued profession, one that doesn't have to compete with working as a fast food server or cashier at a retail store. The stipend will allow talented people to stay in a field that inspires them, where they are making a powerful positive impact on our community. 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.