

Testimony of Jennifer Iachance
In support of
***LD 1726: An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care for Working Families
sponsored by Senate President Troy Jackson***

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Jennifer Iachance. I am a daycare Owner and provider, and I live in Saco. I'm testifying in support of LD 1726 An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care and Working Families.

I support raising childcare worker wages because I think that everything around us is going up and so shouldn't our pay. us daycare providers have been underpaid as long as I've been doing it for about 25 years. We take care of peoples precious kids and don't even make minimum wage and get paid underpaid. You could become a nanny or a babysitter, and make more. And we have to do all this trainings, paperwork, clean food, shop, and so much more. and if you get subsidy, they go below what we ask for Catholic Charities should be all everybody at a level one instead of tier twos in tier ones because they don't give a lot out either. And I just feel as they can't provide is always get the short end of the stick, but if it wasn't for us, parents wouldn't be able to go to work

I support Maine developing a cost model tool that better supports our understanding of what it costs to provide quality care and education because I think there should be more tools more education to help us take care providers and I think we should also have some say with how difficult long days not just five days a week we're doing stuff on weekends and I think that would help us out.

I support raising subsidy eligibility for Maine's lower income families because I feel subsidy is always been lower than even our daycare rates and we're not even getting paid what we should and most people do you get subs today so that puts us and working long days working hard days not getting what we need for money and most people won't take subs today for that reason and those families won't be able to work if that's the case Whoever is in charge of that needs to think of us as providers that we have bills we have our families we have things that we need for daycare and we're working longer hours than most people that work eight or nine hours a day. So I think your families can't afford it they pay their parent fee, whatever but then the state needs to cover the rest to make it fair for us providers to be able to survive our business. And I also think substudy should follow what everyone has in their contract. If a child is absent, the state should pay if we have vacations, the state should pay if we have holidays, the state should pay. What people need to understand is we don't charge for children of attendance. We charge children to hold their spot so if they're out we can't fill that spot to put another child in here and I feel they should go buy a contract and it should be five days a week paid no question just not fair like I said we get paid for their spot not attendance. I just think that if a child comes to daycare that we should get paid what's in our contract and not just what the state wants because it's definitely below all of our contract payments that we ask for parents. And if investments means to up the subsidy, I am definitely for that. What people don't realize either some kids are easy some kids are hard we deal with these kids for about at least 9 to 10 hours a day and if you looked at nannying or babysitters and see how much they would get for a day. We are definitely underpaid with bills and stuff that are needed for daycare. So we definitely are not doing this for the money. We are doing this for the kids and so families can work but I would think it would be fair to give us what we deserve because it's definitely not an easy job.

I support providing funding to pay for child care for child care employees. I don't have employees, but from hearing from other providers, they are not able to keep their help because they're going other places for higher pay, which leads to people at closing daycare or having to lower their numbers because they can't get help, and again we take care of peoples precious kids. It's a lot of work and if people are not getting by, they will go elsewhere. And now with the stars being out it's going to make it 10 times harder for all those people because if they're not qualified, their stars are going to be down to one or two and if most people look at stars like everybody does, everybody looks for a five-star hotel five star restaurant they feel that that's going to be the same for us providers and it's pretty sad because by STARZ doesn't show the care and everything that we do for our families and that's gonna hurt as well.

I support shortened time periods for determining subsidy eligibility because if shorten time means that when people are up for their eligibility that it should be done in a faster, timely manner because we've been putting situations where their case has been closed and then it leads them to have to pay until subsidy can pick up again, and it causes a big interruption with all of that and it makes it harder on us so they need to figure out a way to have parents get their stuff in either sooner so they can see what is needed, etc. or figure out some thing that works so us providers and not the ones that are suffering because we're not getting paid for that child because they've gone over their time limit of the application or if somebody on the other end isn't checking yet fast enough it's leading them to go over their expiration date so something definitely needs to be done about that.

I support shortening time periods for child care programs receiving subsidy reimbursement because I think that if people are eligible for subsidy, it should start right away and it also is a hard thing to and it's happened to me that I've sent billing in and then in two weeks have not received a check and has called and said that I've sent my billing in on time and then I still have to wait two more weeks to get paid even if it's not our fault two weeks is a long time when people got bills coming in and if it's on somebody else's end and not as providers and why do we get punished of not getting paid for another two weeks when the billing goes out for payment that's for weeks and some of us have bills that need to be put in on time, and if we don't have that money, how do we pay for bills.

Please vote in support of LD 1726,
Jennifer lachance