



May 3, 2023

Senator Nicole Grohoski
Representative Joe Perry
Honorable Members of the Taxation Committee
Maine State Legislature
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Testimony in support of LD 1544 – An Act to Improve Economic Security for Maine Children by Establishing the Maine Dependent Tax Credit

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and honorable members of the Taxation Committee:

My name is Richard A. Hooks Wayman, and I am a resident of Maine and serve as the President & CEO for VOA Northern New England which is headquartered in Brunswick. I wish to offer this letter as my written testimony in support of LD 1544 to establish the Maine Dependent Tax Credit.

Volunteers of America (VOA) Northern New England is a faith-based community nonprofit that works with households experiencing deep poverty, disabilities, and homelessness. Our organization provides affordable housing and homeless services to people across our state. We know the importance of providing direct cash assistance to persons who live at or below the poverty line.

The federal Child Tax Credit was directly responsible for reducing child poverty in Maine by one-half. Child tax credits, and Maine's existing dependent exemption tax credit, are some of the most powerful tools the state has at its disposal to reduce child poverty and bolster families. As a nonprofit employee for over 270 persons in Maine, I heard from several parents last year how important the child tax credit was for them to pay utilities, purchase school supplies, or lessen personal debts.

Raising children is expensive. As families struggle with rising housing costs, inflation, increasing energy costs, and childcare expenses, strengthening this tax credit will provide tangible support. By establishing the Maine Child Tax Credit at \$350 per child, this proposal will reduce child poverty by over 12% according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. This is a positive win for families!

I would ask you to give this bill your consideration and approval. Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Richard A. Hooks Wayman'.

Richard A. Hooks Wayman
President & CEO
VOA Northern New England

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