

My testimony for LD 1726:

Testimony of May 6, 2023

In support of LD 1726 An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care and Working Families

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Nancy Crockett and I am a FCC provider in Gorham, ME. 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 child care educator wages because they are one of the lowest paying careers there is. If you were to divide our weekly wages into an hourly wage it comes out to approximately \$5.19, for myself anyway. And that is based on 50 hours. Many of us work more than 50 hours a week.*

*I support Maine developing a cost model tool that better supports the understanding of what it costs to provide quality care and education because there are so many expenses, we pay for that isn't even known. We provided lots of educational materials to assist children in being prepared for Pre-K or Kindergarten. We provide many educational toys to also assist in this learning. We teach the basics like the Alphabet, counting, shapes, colors, patterns and so much more. We pay for these materials out of our own pocket which takes away from our earned and living income.*

*I heavily support raising subsidy eligibility for Maine's lower income families because many families can't even make a living wage if they have to pay for child care costs. This increases unemployment rates.*

*This one means a lot to me. I highly support more stable funding for child care programs by ensuring that subsidy reimbursement covers days when children are absent from their program because it isn't really fair to us providers that do take the subsidy program, so that more parents are able to work, yet we are severely punished if parents take Vacations, we take Vacations or either takes the day off. So many programs refuse to take on children who belong to the subsidy program because of this reason. It effects are income in a negative way and makes many providers re-think or just refusing to accepted the subsidy program. That makes it more difficult for parents to locate child care.*

*Although I know DHHS is also having staffing issues too, I do support shortened time periods for determining subsidy eligibility. This gets children into programs that do accept subsidy vouchers quicker and parents to work sooner.*

*I would love to see the time period for reimbursements shortened. My parent paid clients have to make payments each Friday, yet those of us that need to bill for subsidy payments have to wait two weeks or sometimes more to get our payment. This can make paying our own bills on time difficult for us providers.*

I appreciate your time in reading my concerns. I hope that you can put yourself in my position. Our career choice is often not taken seriously. We are often referred to as "Babysitters", which could not be

further from accurate. Although many of us do not have degrees, we have experience, which is more important when you are working with and teaching children.

Sincerely,

Nancy Crockett  
Licensed Child care provider  
Gorham, ME