

Testimony of Amelia Roy
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 Amelia Roy. I am a Childcare Teacher, and I live in Limestone. 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 childcare workers are among some of the hardest working, yet least appreciated workers out there. We deal with sickness after sickness, dangerous behaviors from children, and SO much more. Though we teach these children the first crucial lifestyle skills, we are not considered teachers. We are simply called "babysitters", yet we are so much more than that. We are nurturers, caregivers, and role models for these children. We deserve higher wages because we work long, hard hours to ensure that your children are well taken care of and loved when parents are hard at work.

Believe it or not, the workforce revolves around some type of childcare. Whether it be in-home care, center based care, or even family childcare; most families with young children would not be able to function without it. However; some other workers call childcare "overpriced" without knowing any of the background costs that come with it, which is why I support Maine developing a cost model tool that better supports our understanding of what it costs to provide quality care and education.

Working class families are struggling to obtain childcare because of the price. If subsidy eligibility was raised for those who wouldn't typically be eligible for it, we would be able to get more parents back in the workforce. Many families are only getting one income because parents are forced to stay home with children when they can't afford childcare.

I support ensuring that subsidy reimbursement covers days when children are absent from their program because when children are absent to a program, no difference is made in what resources are used. The building still needs heat, electricity, and other necessities to run even if one child is not there that day. Subsidy should have to cover days of absence just like any other family who does not get subsidy should have to.

I support Maine developing a long term plan to increase investments in child care programs because I am sick and tired of having to work paycheck to paycheck at the job I love so much. I love my childcare job more than anyone could imagine, but some times it just doesn't pay the bills! Many of us childcare teachers have to pick up a second, or even a third job just to make ends meet. Personally I work a 40 hour week at my center, then on the weekends I babysit and clean for families I know for extra money. Childcare teachers deserve so much more. We deserve a decent wage and access to healthcare just as most other jobs do.

Head start eligibility should be available to everyone in my opinion. But however I understand that won't always work. I do not believe that such a useful and educational early childhood program should be limited to only low income children, but to all children whose parents are interested, which is why I support increasing Head Start eligibility and funding.

In the past few years I have seen MANY coworkers be forced to quit their jobs because A) there is no space for their child in the center or B) they cannot afford to pay the fees. A lot of centers allow workers to bring their children at a reduced rate but at some centers this is still too much for them. They're basically working to pay for childcare and that is a problem. They should not have to worry about paying for childcare when they work in that center. I support funding to pay for childcare for childcare workers!

I support shortened time periods for determining subsidy eligibility because it takes much too long for subsidy eligibility to be determined, and often, by the time it is determined, the parents have lost their job opportunities that depended on this childcare.

I also support shortened time periods for child care programs receiving subsidy reimbursement because subsidy reimbursement should have to come in at the same rate that every other parent who is ineligible for subsidy has to pay. It is unfair for owners who have a large amount of CCSP children to not receive their money for certain children at the same time, and takes a lot of planning and budgeting for childcare owners, adding another thing to their already very busy schedule.

Please vote in support of LD 1726,
Amelia Roy