

Testimony of Lydia Pillsbury  
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 Lydia Pillsbury. I am a social worker, and I live in Portland. I'm testifying in support of LD 1726 An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care and Working Families.

Early childcare educators play an incredibly important role in the safe and healthy development of our children. These early years can set a child on a course of safety, security, positive growth, and foster a love of learning. Early childhood educators are underpaid for the work they are doing caring, loving, and supporting young people. I support raising wages to reward and recruit strong and competent educators and to provide livable wages to those working in this field.

Data matters. The state would benefit from a cost model to understand the finances of early childhood education across the state, because early childhood education matters and data efficiency matters and our dollars matter. It is imperative that the story is clear. Better policy will be made with better data.

At this point, access to high quality early childcare is not affordable to most. I support raising the subsidy for broader eligibility because all children should have access to good childcare. Equity matters.

I support more stable funding for child care programs because stable funding = stable programming. Childcare providers should not be punished when a child is sick or a family misses school.

A long term investment in Maine's childcare will boost the health and well being of all Mainers. To do that we need greater investments, including an increase to the subsidy eligibility.

Head Start is a strong childcare program and should receive more funding to increase access across the state.

I support providing funding to pay for childcare for childcare employees so that these educators can work in this field, continue to develop and grow as professionals, and afford to have their children receiving the services they provide to others.

I support shortened time periods for determining subsidy eligibility and shortened time periods for childcare programs receiving subsidy reimbursement because this is an urgent matter and bureaucracy hurts children.

Please vote in support of LD 1726,  
Lydia Pillsbury