

Testimony of Karina Zellou

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 Karina Zellou. I am a teacher/caregiver, and I live in Westbrook. 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 educator wages because it is a demanding job that should have qualified and able individuals in the work space. In order to shape the youth and future generations, we need teachers who love to teach and have education backgrounds. To have this, we need to be paying a live-able wage.

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 believe it would give more insight on what it takes to create quality care. We need resources, materials, educated individuals, communication with the community, etc. And a useful way of understanding this would be by developing a cost model tool.

I support raising subsidy eligibility for Maine's lower income families because trying to provide and exist is so hard these days. Trying to make ends meet with a family is close to impossible for average income let alone lower income families and every child has a right to quality care and education.

I support ensuring that subsidy reimbursement covers days when children are absent from their program because every child deserves a quality care education. If the reimbursement covers days when children are absent, that can ensure that the provider gets compensated in order for the school to function while also ensuring the child continues their education.

I support Maine developing a long term plan to increase investments in child care programs while also increasing subsidy eligibility because this ensures a means for every child to get the education they deserve. No child falling through the education system.

support increasing Head Start eligibility and funding because we need the experienced teachers to create meaningful lesson and teaching. We need the funds to keep these teachers. Increasing head start eligibility would also help decrease the amount of students not getting the education they deserve.

I support providing funding to pay for child care for child care employees because childcare wages are low but childcare expenses are high. How is that fair? How is that live-able? This would help families create a life for themselves and their loved ones.

I support shortened time periods for determining subsidy eligibility because it seems like a lot of time is wasted that the child could be getting an education. I also support shortened time periods for child care programs receiving subsidy reimbursement because the child should be getting a proper education. Shortening the time periods would assist with this.

Please vote in support of LD 1726,
Karina Zellou