

Jordyn Rossignol's Testimony in favor of [LD 1726: An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care for Working Families](#)

My name is Jordyn Rossignol and I own and operate Miss Jordyn's Child Development Center in Caribou, Maine.

Today's hearing is something I have been waiting for for quite some time. I have been telling my story for 3 years now in anticipation of today. I have been shouting from the rooftops and explaining why we are in crisis to anyone who will listen. My story has been featured in the Washington Post, on NPR's This American Life Podcast and multiple local and state news outlets. I've held town hall meetings, spoken in open forum at our city council meetings and I even went as far as to run for office myself to help bring even more awareness and ACTION to this issue. BUT after all of that, TODAY is our moment to tell ALL of our stories. Today we have an opportunity, once and for all, to bring action and relief to a crisis that has been plaguing all of our communities throughout the state. I am very grateful to President Jackson for not only taking the time to listen to us, but for spending real time investigating the true crisis that it is. He did this by visiting our centers and seeing first hand the trouble we are in; all the juggling to make sure all of our classrooms are properly staffed, the hoops we jump through to be in compliance with the multitude of licensing regulations, the worry and fear that we cannot pay our rent or our utilities in our buildings and the most common contribution to our troubles, constantly having to say a heartbreaking goodbye to our teachers who leave us for actual livable wages.

Recently I sat down with one of my Toddler lead teachers and with tears in her eyes she said, "Do you know what breaks my heart? After so many different jobs I've had, I finally found my calling and what actually makes me happy but I know I won't be able to do it forever. I need health insurance so I know, someday I'll have to leave these kids too". I don't want to lose her. I don't want to lose the teachers who come in on weekends to finish up Mother's day projects. I don't want to say goodbye to the teacher who makes sure a little girl being raised by a single dad has her hair done each morning before the day starts. I don't want to lose the teachers who my own daughter cries for on Saturdays because she misses them. These are the men and women who hold up our communities and we pay them less than we would pay someone to make us a cheeseburger at a chain fast food restaurant. They are critical to our economy, to our local infrastructure and they can no longer be treated or paid like "babysitters".

We need to professionalize this career and the way we do this is by PAYING EARLY EDUCATORS AS THE PROFESSIONALS THEY ARE...by investing in early care and education we are investing in our community. We are keeping hard working parents in the workforce. When we have had to close our centers due to lack of staff for a day or two, the chain effect our closures have on our community is staggering. It affects everyone. And it will only get worse if we continue to act like there IS no problem, like there IS no crisis.

There is NOTHING else I want to do. I LOVE coming to work each day. However, I don't know how much longer I can continue at this pace. In 2021, I made a grand total of \$13,000. Working 50-70 hours a week, putting my all into this school. I LOVE seeing the faces of my children, all

100 of them, each and every day, but I cannot keep doing this work and caring for my own family without the funding that will keep my doors open. I myself and other providers in my area have already begun applying for other jobs, looking for a plan B option and some have begun the process of dissolving their businesses if we don't get the help we need. Please do not let it get to that point and consider the continuation of this much needed piece of legislation.