

Testimony of Karen Cribby
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 Karen Cribby. I am the owner and director of a childcare center, and I live in York. 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 it is impossible to pay a high wage to childcare workers as we rely on parents to pay us. A childcare worker who is excellent with qualifications should be paid \$20.00+ an hour but that means parents have to pay more for childcare which most can not afford. So that forced women mainly to give up their profession until their children are in public schools

I support Maine developing a cost model tool that better supports our understanding of what it costs to provide quality care and education because people think of childcare as a babysitting service. It is a profession that should be better understood including educating the public of state guidelines and the cost to meet all of those. If we break down the cost they will better understand the need for federal and state assistance to run a childcare center.

I support raising subsidy eligibility for Maine's lower income families. I have a family at my center right now with two children . They make \$90,000 between the two of them. She will need to give up her teaching position because they can not afford the 325 a week for her infant and the 250 a week for her 3 year old and they get no assistance. We have to do better.

I support ensuring that subsidy reimbursement covers days when children are absent from their program because when children are absent it does not change our expenses. We still have to heat the building, have the staff there, so parents still pay when children are out and subsidy programs should do the same.

I support Maine developing a long term plan to increase investments in child care programs while also increasing subsidy eligibility. I have a toddler room I can not staff so it's not open. If I continue to lose staff to Target and Walgreens then I will be forced to shut my doors. It is extremely difficult to keep staff as they have to take CEUs and maintain safety courses and CPR/Firstaid, many other things. They get paid the same to work at Target. Why would they work childcare if the pay is the same?

I support increasing Head Start eligibility and funding because children should be an investment. They are the future. We are doing a terrible job raising these kids and mental health issues are huge. We need to start early and the lower income families need more help.

I support providing funding to pay for child care for child care employees because we can not compete with other job opportunities that are less stressful with less requirements. People who work in childcare generally enjoy children and many are mothers who could not afford to work unless they get some sort of discount or help from the employer.

I support shortened time periods for determining subsidy eligibility because if it's too long a wait they end up quitting their jobs as stress to wait and not knowing is not worth it.

I support shortened time periods for child care programs receiving subsidy reimbursement. It should be weekly submitted in my opinion. All parents pay weekly before the child attends. Waiting two weeks after the child has come is burdening the employer again.

Please vote in support of LD 1726,
Karen Cribby