

In support of
LD 1726 An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care and Working Families

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Julia Fritz and I am Scarborough resident, a pediatric gastroenterologist and mother of 2 children (2 years 10 months, 1 year). I'm testifying in support of LD 1726 An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care and Working Families.

When my husband and I decided to have children, we didn't think much about how it would impact our work – I was fortunate enough to receive a generous parental leave from work and my husband was starting a chemical consulting company which meant he had some flexibility in scheduling. We planned ahead, putting our names on the waitlists at several day cares that fit our goals, and continued on. That was January/February 2020. Needless to say, the pandemic changed many things, not the least of which was our options for childcare. Here we are, 3+ years later, and while both of our children are in a wonderful day care that we feel fortunate to be a part of, the impact is still being felt. My husband has ended his chemistry consulting business to take care of our kids on the days we don't have childcare, and as he thinks about other ways to enter the workforce, our continued need for reliable, affordable childcare continues to limit his options. My career has also been impacted - I have needed to restructure my clinic so I am able to help with day care pick up (which must be completed by 5pm as a result of their staffing difficulty). We hear frequently about our childcare center's struggle in finding and keeping qualified staff, which is heartbreaking because it really feels like a great place to work! And we recognize that we are the fortunate ones. At least weekly I hear patient families worry about how they are going to find appropriate and affordable childcare and I have many families under my care who have left the workforce because they couldn't find a childcare facility that would accept their child with a medical condition. We need well trained, well paid, and committed child care workers to allow those of us who work outside the home to do so confidently and with some flexibility. Investing in child care educators and the Head Start program is not only investing in Maine's children and future, it's investing in Maine's working families now and will have immediate benefits. Please support this bill.



Our daughter, Willa, checking in on our son, Grant, on his first day at day care