

Testimony of Beth Stacy
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 Beth Stacy. I am a preschool and child care business owner, and I live in Berwick. I'm testifying in support of LD 1726 An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care and Working Families.

I support increasing the monthly child care wage stipend program because teaching is one of the most important professions. Childcare is a necessity for parents to work. Raising childcare educator wages will help to attract and recruit new employees, boost morale and retain loyal, dedicated employees who have been the backbone of a thriving economy!

A cost model tool for childcare would offer a deeper understanding as to the actual cost of childcare and the importance of higher teacher wages.

All children deserve quality education & care alongside peers and loving mentors/teachers and should not be held back due to financial constraints.

Childcare Programs rely on parent/subsidy funds to pay for staff and operating expenses. If a parent chooses a specific program/education for their child, subsidy funds should match what the other families are paying to afford continuity in program quality and effectiveness. This includes registration fees, annual program fees, vacations, snow days, sick days, staff development days/training, etc. It has been especially hard after Covid, having such a staffing crisis. We support Maine's working families!

Investment in childcare means brighter futures for children and greater economic stability and growth!

I support increasing eligibility for Head Start because it is a great program that has benefited many low income families.

I absolutely support providing funding to pay for childcare for employees as many teachers go into the field to be with their children and help support their household. I also support funding toward teacher meals for food serving programs, health/exercise programs, adequate insurance (Health, Dental, Vision) and continuing education through a Master's Degree. Teaching is a rewarding, yet demanding job and if we expect our teachers to show up and give their best then we should help provide the best for them to achieve their goals!

Shortened time periods will help students integrate into schedules sooner, help parents get to work and bridge the gap of unfulfilled childcare spots.

I support shortened time periods for child care programs receiving subsidy reimbursement. Programs rely on this money to provide safe, quality care & education.

Thank you and please support LD 1726.