

**LD 1729**  
**“An Act to Reduce Child Care Provider Regulation”**  
**Health & Human Services Committee**

**Testimony of:**

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Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Joni Sprague and I work with The Maine State Parent Ambassadors program. I am a resident of Kennebec County and I'm here today testifying in opposition of LD 1729 An Act to Reduce Child Care Provider Regulations.

I am testifying in opposition of LD 1729, “An Act to Reduce Child Care Provider Regulations”. There are several concerns that The Maine State Parent Ambassadors have with this bill. There has been a lot of work done around ensuring there are quality programs available for families. Some of the ideas in this bill set us back decades in providing quality care to children and families. Increasing group sizes and the ratios of staff to children is concerning. There has been an abundance of research that shows the lower the ratio the better the care the children are receiving and also the stress level of the staff is also lower. I also want to mention after coming out of the pandemic, children are having a harder time succeeding in a school setting and require more attention from the staff to help them transition.

Another concern is that this would allow programs to charge parents that are on the childcare subsidy, the difference between what the childcare subsidies will pay and the private pay rate. The families that utilize these programs are working to provide for their families and qualify for a reduced rate for childcare. This would create hardship for families and keep them in the cycle of poverty.

Currently childcare centers have to be licensed every two years. In this bill, that would change to every five years. This could lead to requirements getting less towards the five year mark. With licensing every two years, someone is checking to make sure that all of the requirements are in place for quality care.

This bill also would remove requirements for staff qualifications at child care facilities. Again, as I have said this, is making us go back in time and removing regulations could decrease the quality care that is available for families.

It is time to realize that we do not want to take steps back in the childcare provider regulations, were put in place for a reason. It starts here with voting in opposition to LD 1729.

Thank you for your time,  
Joni Sprague