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May 17, 2023

Senator Rotondo and Representative Sachs and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, my name is Laura Blaisdell, I am practicing pediatrician and the current president of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

I am writing to express great concern regarding the lack of investment in the foundational challenges of Maine's child care system in the Governors Change package to LD 258.

The tax credit for families proposed in LD 258 are not the same as child tax credits. The tax credit proposes a very small reimbursement in comparison to child care costs. Additionally, many lower income, families are excluded from the proposed tax credit. The number of families in Maine, that would be eligible to receive the double child and dependent care tax credit are represented in only 9% child care programs that are rated at the highest level on the Quality Rating and Improvements Scale.

In my work with families I seen time and again that families need access to affordable quality child care. An increase in child care wages is necessary to increase availability across the stage. We also need to expand subsidy and Head Start eligibility to reduce the cost burden on families.

Our children are our future and we know that investing in them has an immeasurable but certainly mulit-fold return on investment. I stand here as a voice to the thousands of children in Maine who need quality child care systems to grow and thrive. Please consider a change package that includes more robust funding for our child care system including increased wages and expanded subsidies.

Respectfully,

Dr. Laura Blaisdell MD/MPH, FAAP

President, Maine Chapter AAP