



Megan Hannan, Executive Director
Maine Community Action Partnership
176 Washington St.
Bath ME 04530
207-831-9893

Jason Parent, CEO
Aroostook County Action Program, Inc.
PO Box 1116
Presque Isle, ME 04769-1116
207-764-3721

James Martin, CEO
Community Concepts, Inc.
240 Bates Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-739-6553

Rebecca Palmer, Executive Director
Downeast Community Partners
248 Bucksport Road
Ellsworth, ME 04605
207-610-5904

Suzanne Walsh, CEO
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
97 Water Street
Waterville, ME 04901
207-859-1579

Claire Berkowitz, President & CEO
Midcoast Maine Community Action
34 Wing Farm Parkway
Bath, ME 04530
207-442-7963

Joe Everett, President & CEO
Opportunity Alliance
50 Lydia Lane
South Portland, ME 04106
207-523-5055

Kara Hay, President & CEO
Penquis
PO Box 1162
Bangor, ME 04402
207-973-3500

Donna Kelley, President & CEO
Waldo Community Action Partners
PO Box 130
Belfast, ME 04915
207-338-6809

Jim Trundy, Executive Director
Western Maine Community Action, Inc.
PO Box 200
East Wilton, ME 04234-0200
207-743-7763

Carter Friend, Executive Director
York County Community Action Corporation
PO Box 72
Sanford, ME 04073
207-324-5762

Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 1877 An Act to Reduce the Number of Children Living in Deep Poverty by Adjusting Assistance for Low-income Families

February 1, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, members of the Committee On Health and Human Services, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of the Maine Community Action Partnership, the membership association of the ten community action agencies in Maine, we support LD 1877 An Act to Reduce the Number of Children Living in Deep Poverty by Adjusting Assistance for Low-income Families.

Our state's greatest resource is our people, and our state's policies shape people's possibilities. In Community Action, we create conditions that invite children to learn and adults to apply their skills, tapping into the potential in our communities.

Studies have proven that to improve the lives of low-income families in the present and future, we need to address the needs of the entire family – so we help the parents or caregivers with their educational and/or employment needs, while also ensuring the children have high quality early care and education.

More than anything, families need money. Increasing TANF funds for housing, clothing, transportation – and, importantly – whatever they need, will not only increase the family's economic and social well-being, it will also decrease the toxic stress associated with low income and poverty. We know, the science is clear, that the first five years of brain development are foundational to human growth and development. Wrapping a family in supports during this critical time for children is a multi-level prevention strategy: it leads to better outcomes for children as they do better in school from K-12 and beyond; it supports parents to earn more to do more, lessening the stress that could lead to adverse childhood events, therefore lessening the likelihood of requiring child protection services; it supports and strengthens communities, which in turn support and strengthen families.

In the summary of this bill, it states that this: "changes the policy goal of the provision of assistance to low-income families to allow those families to live with economic stability"; what it does not state, but certainly also does, is allows low-income families to live with dignity, grace and a reliable source of support.

Thank you for your time, I am happy to answer your questions that I can.

Megan Hannan
Executive Director
mhannan@mecap.org
207.831.9893