

Testimony of Amanda Leclerc  
In support of  
***LD 2199: An Act to Ensure Subsidy Reimbursements and Emergency Financial Assistance for  
Certain Child Care Providers  
sponsored by Senate President Troy Jackson***

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Amanda Leclerc. I am a Director, and I live in Greene. I'm testifying in support of LD 2199: An Act to Ensure Subsidy Reimbursements and Emergency Financial Assistance for Certain Child Care Providers.

We are required by the state to maintain ratios and we already struggle to find and keep staff. If children don't attend and we anticipate they may, we have to staff based on anticipation which means we will always staff more so we are covered rather than less and be out of ratio. The problem arises when we don't get paid based off from enrollment (which is how we charge our parents) as the state does not. We then have to make the decision to send staff home which they can't afford to lose their paycheck, but the center can't afford to pay when we aren't getting paid and therefore, we lose staff. It's a vicious cycle. When Maine was paying based on enrollment vs attendance our center was able to keep staff here even when the attendance was low allowing teachers to work on trainings, curriculum, and deep cleaning to prevent sickness and thereby able to keep and maintain staff.

We lost our building to fire in 2020. We were on the verge of closing our doors as we had nowhere to go and although we had insurance it takes a while to get. We had no resources available to us and we struggled to find a place and quick funding to help us and the 100 children in our care. We were very lucky that we had a parent enrolled with us that owned a local business and moved everything out and also allowed us to put a temporary portable classroom next to his building so that we could remain open while we rebuilt. We had to take out a loan to do this until insurance money kicked in. This put a huge financial strain on us as we didn't have any income coming in and couldn't until we could reopen in the temporary building, our staff was struggling because they wanted to stay with us but couldn't go without paychecks. In the end the loan and draining all of our personal savings pulled us through, but having access to emergency funding would have made a huge impact and saved us some added stress during an already traumatic time.

Please vote in support of LD 2199.