

Testimony of Kayla Barter
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 Kayla Barter. I am a Childcare Owner, and I live in Woolwich. I'm testifying in support of LD 2199: An Act to Ensure Subsidy Reimbursements and Emergency Financial Assistance for Certain Child Care Providers.

As owners we have to pay the same amount in payroll, rent, groceries, materials, utilities, and so much more whether a child attends for the day or not because we planned on their presence and were prepared to provide for them. I require all full pay families to pay based on their enrollment slot, not on attendance - this ensures that I have the funds and can plan appropriately for my finances. We cannot afford to have uncertain and unpredictable income in this field, it is too detrimental to our businesses and finances. Think of it as college -- you pay for your experience, enrollment slot, and the guarantee that you're going to receive a high quality education. You don't get to pay just on the days that you attend, you are paying to enroll yourself in the program and all that it entails whether you are in attendance daily or not.

During the pandemic, it was so helpful that subsidy paid based on enrollment not attendance because it alleviated the financial uncertainty and burden of inconsistent tuition payments for children enrolled in the subsidy program. It made my finances definite, and made my overall business budgeting feel much more stable.

I have not yet had to reduce my subsidy acceptance but I will say that this is one of the biggest drawbacks in the subsidy system and is what deters many providers from participating. A lack of providers participating hurts families in our community and sometimes means ripping away a child's enrollment in high quality early education - and we know the benefits there!

Please vote in support of LD 2199.