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LD 2199

Without child care, parents cannot go to work or go to work full time. Maine's infant and toddler child care shortage costs families, businesses and taxpayers an estimated \$403 million each year. This is double the cost from just four years ago.

Too many parents can't find child care providers with open slots and too many child care providers are barely scraping by.

Last year, Maine child care programs served an estimated 9,422 fewer children than licensed to serve, largely due a lack of staff.

Maine needs roughly 1,090 child care teachers to fill this gap.

Most for-profit providers have margins of less than 1% leaving them on the brink of closing.

This year we are asking legislators and the Governor to fix a problem that costs child businesses collectively nearly \$5 million dollars a year.

Currently, providers who participate in Maine's Child Care Affordability Program are paid subsidy rates based on a child's attendance and not enrollment. If a child is out sick or for any reason, the child care provider is not paid for certain days. Yet, the provider still has to pay their staff, the rent or mortgage, and the electricity to keep the lights on in the program. They must continue to provide services for the day as if the classroom was full.

Think of how our public schools would be impacted if teachers were paid a prorated amount based on the number of kids in class each day. It is not fair.

I support Senate President Jackson's bill, LD 2199.