

David Brenerman  
Gorham  
LD 2197

Testimony by  
David Brenerman

Former Portland Mayor, City Councilor and State Legislator

On LD 2197

An Act to Strengthen the Health, Well-being and Academic Success of Children and Their Families through Increased Community Support of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Maine

Maine Legislature Health and Human Resources Committee  
February 20, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

I am David Brenerman of Gorham, a former Portland Mayor, City Councilor and State Legislator, and long-time board member of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Maine. I also was a member of this HHS Committee's predecessor Health and Institutional Services Committee during the 108th and 109th Maine Legislature.

Every day, hundreds of Maine children leave school in the afternoon with little adult supervision at home. For many decades, the Boys and Girls Clubs (BGC) have provided a safe place for kids to go after school to do homework, have a nutritious meal or snack, learn healthy lifestyles, and participate in arts and music programs, leadership activities, sports, STEM programs, to name a few. Many of these programs are also available to them in the summer.

In recent years, the clubs have focused our teen members on career exploration and skill development through our Bridge to Success program. Our goal is to provide the space, guidance and technical training, starting in middle school and advancing through High School. In addition, we are also supporting our members in their first couple years of college and community college. Others testifying today can explain the program further.

The purpose of Speaker Talbot Ross' bill is provide state funding to allow the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Maine to 1) serve more children in its clubhouses in southern Maine; 2) to invest in the new Bridge to Success Center to be constructed in 2025, which will allow junior high and high school youth to explore careers, build skills in a number of fields, and hopefully to ignite their passions to enter the trades or seek higher education, but most importantly to develop a plan for their future. And 3) to serve as a pilot and model for other after-school programs in Maine.

For many years, Boys and Girls Clubs have provided services to kids who need us most. The results of the efforts of our staff are demonstrated every day by the testimonials of our members who consider the clubs their home away from home.

I urge you to support LD 2197 and help more Maine children receive our services and to support the development of this exciting new Bridge to Success program. Thanks for your consideration.

David Brenerman  
Gorham, Maine  
Bren125d@aol.com