

Testimony on LD 2199

February 20, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyers, and distinguished members of the health and Human Services Committee, my name is Laurie Davis and I live in Greenville, Maine, located in Piscataquis County. I am the treasurer of the Board of Directors of Little Schoolhouse Childcare Center, the only licensed childcare center in the Greenville region. I am testifying in support of LD 2199, An Act to Ensure Subsidy Reimbursements and Emergency Financial Assistance for Certain Child Care Providers.

In Greenville, Little Schoolhouse Childcare is licensed to provide childcare for 40 children from 6 weeks of age to school age and is committed to providing childcare to all families in the region without regard to a family's income status. We actively encourage and support families in applying for subsidy through the Maine Child Care Affordability Program even though we will be reimbursed far less than the rate paid by private-pay families for the children whose families participate in the subsidy program. When this loss is then compounded by only being reimbursed for the days that children on subsidy attend rather than for enrollment like our private-pay families, Little Schoolhouse Childcare's income losses mount and are frankly not sustainable.

Childcare centers operate on razor thin margins and frankly, it is a losing battle. Last year when I testified before this Committee, I shared that Little Schoolhouse had made payroll that morning with only \$253 left in the bank. This year, we are serving more children, our waiting list is longer, and our situation is not any better. The loss of \$10,372 in State one-time funding received last year but not this year, has left our center having to fundraise to ensure there will be sufficient funding to make payroll next week. And the State's reimbursement practices add to financial woes.

I would urge you to pass this bill, as addressing the State's reimbursement practices for the Maine Child Care Affordability Program will help the financial stability and sustainability of Greenville's Little Schoolhouse Childcare Center.

Laurie J. Davis
Treasurer, Board of Directors
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