



## **Testimony in Support of LD 2199 – An Act to Ensure Subsidy Reimbursements and Emergency Financial Assistance for Certain Child Care Providers**

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
February 20, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, Honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is JR Kenny. I am the Lead Director of Government Relations, Boys & Girls Clubs of America. I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs to express our support of LD 2199, an Act to Ensure Subsidy Reimbursements and Emergency Financial Assistance for Certain Childcare Providers.

Overall, Boys & Girls Clubs across Maine serve nearly 8,000 youth annually across twenty-two sites. Clubs work to meet the needs of youth and their families in the communities we serve and wrap learning and personal growth into fun ways to engage youth in the areas of healthy habits, academic enhancement, and character and leadership development. Boys & Girls Clubs provide services to school-aged youth (6 to 18 years old) and operate during critical afterschool and summertime periods, when many youths find themselves alone and unsupervised.

Youth who attend Clubs also can engage in evidence-informed and evidence-based programming that covers everything from physical health to mental health to substance misuse and other risky behavior prevention. Two of our Clubs, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Waterville located at the Alford Youth & Community Center and Boys & Girls Club of Kennebec Valley are also licensed childcare providers. As licensed childcare providers, Clubs are able to provide multiple services to families, including critical childcare services in their communities. Quality and reliable childcare enables parents to go to work or further their education without worrying if their children are safe and receiving the support they need.

The childcare providers participating in Maine's Childcare Affordability Program should be paid subsidy rates that are based on enrollment, rather than based on attendance as they currently are. Reimbursement based on attendance does not take into effect days students are sick or cannot attend programs. Providers must staff according to enrollment and the cost is fixed whether there it is a full class or not. The cost of running a childcare center, including staffing, the mortgage or rent, and the electricity and internet bills, do not change based on the number of students who attend. LD 2199 fixes this problem.

As it currently stands, providers are currently paid if a child attends the program. This inconsistency in payment makes hiring workers / staff more challenging as providers need to cover those costs not covered by the state because of an absence. Due to this uncertainty, childcare providers are less likely to open new childcare spots. Without consistent funding, childcare providers will continue to staff to what they can afford and not open needed new spots to fulfill the need.

We also support the establishment of an emergency fund to support childcare providers who find themselves in need of temporary assistance to keep from closing their program. A \$3 million emergency fund would provide critical assistance in times of unforeseen need, so that we can help keep children in childcare, and thus, Maine parents in the workforce or furthering their education.

Thank you very much for your time, I urge you to support LD 2199.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JR Kenny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

JR Kenny  
Lead Director, Government Relations  
Boys & Girls Clubs of America  
Maine Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs