

Sasha Michaud
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LD 2214

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Committees,

My name is Sasha Michaud and I am a substitute educator in the preschool classroom at the Bowdoin College Children's Center . I live in Brunswick, ME & I am also a recent Bowdoin alum as of May '22. I am asking you to reject the following childcare initiatives in the Supplemental budget:

---> Reducing funding by recognizing one-time General Fund savings for monthly wage supplements for all child care workers due to the October 25, 2023 effective date of Public Law 2023, chapter 412.

* It is imperative that funding allocated to the child care wage supplement program be carried through to ensure full implementation for the remainder of the fiscal year as early childhood educators continue to improve on their professional development and achieve higher paying tiers. If this funding is reduced, there is a risk of having to lower the wage tiers hurting childcare educators' paychecks.

As a neurodivergent and disabled young person struggling in the society of late-stage capitalism that we live in, I depend on these supplemental aspects to my income at the moment.

-Given my diagnosed chronic health conditions (in addition to the mental health care I'm receiving care for) I am not able to work more or otherwise I am severely risking my health and well-being.

- An extra \$200-300 a month (range due to the potential increases to this portion in the coming future, given you hear our messages now) is personally the difference between being able to make rent for the upcoming month or buying myself groceries for the next couple weeks.

- I am sure that I am not the only one who relies on this increased aspect of income in this time. Childcare workers especially need this.

Reducing funding on a one-time basis due to the delayed implementation of changes to income eligibility for child care subsidies in the Child Care Affordability Program enacted in Public Law 2023, chapter 412, Part VVV.

* Families were promised this expansion would begin on January 1st, 2024 through the law passed by this legislature and again in a press release issued by the Governor. To backtrack on the progress of this initiative is ignoring the continued challenges families face in affording and accessing child care and is mute to the ongoing child care crisis in in your communities.

Reducing funding by recognizing one-time savings for child care staff in the Maine Child Care Affordability Program due to delaying implementation until fiscal year 2024-25.

* Child care programs and educators have been anticipating the start of this program as intended in law and NOT a time limited, piloted program. This is a promising step forward in recruiting and retaining the child care workforce (I personally have stayed and will continue to stay for longer based on this detail and few others). Every day we delay this program, more childcare educators leave the field. The Legislature did the hard work to ensure this recruitment and retention strategy to build back the child care educator workforce and the proposal to delay the budget sends a message that educators' needs go unheard.

If Maine is to make good on a promise the Legislature made to address the childcare crisis, then please reject these initiatives and send the message that we will move forward as a state and attend to the needs of young children, their families, and this

incredible workforce behind the workforce.