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Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and the Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, my name is Gina Morin and I live in Auburn.

Gov Mills submitted an amendment to the supplemental budget stating that she intends to invest in childcare. The legislature already voted to help families with funding that would go to childcare workers and the parents paying for childcare. Instead, Gov Mills is proposing to give this money to the companies who are already financially preying on parents and their workers. Childcare workers require extra training and need to be certified. Their wages are very low. Parents are already being crushed by the outrageous cost of childcare. Are we expected to turn a blind eye by calling this childcare funding. I know I'm speaking up hoping our lawmakers will do the right thing.

When I was younger, I was fortunate that my mom ran a daycare. I received my childcare free. If it were not for my mom, I wouldn't have been able to work and pay for childcare. Now, I have 2 grandchildren. I know my daughter is thankful the oldest cares for the youngest while she works. There's no way she could keep her job otherwise.

We appreciate the new proposed investments in affordable housing. We hope that the legislature strengthens this proposal by investing in rent relief to keep people in their homes and help them find homes.

I have a friend who has been unhoused for almost a year. She is working with a housing case worker and has gotten 2 vouchers so far. Both of them ran out before she could find a landlord willing to take her voucher. She is currently filling out the paperwork with her worker for a 3rd voucher. When she got her first voucher, she was so excited. She said she would finally have a place to call home. Now, she says she is not counting on anything. What are folks supposed to do? The voucher system can only work if there is cooperation.

I have an apartment and the rent is extremely low. Even with the low rent and a housemate, I still pay more than 30% of my income on rent. I worry because I have an aging landlord and I don't know what will happen when he does finally retire. I do know if corporate housing takes over my building, I will get priced out of my apartment. I'm concerned because in 2016, I was forced out of my home and I lived in my car for 10 days. Afterwards, I rented a motel room where I lived for over 4 years. Everyone deserves to be housed.

Gov Mills' proposal also maintains cuts to SNAP, hurting the food insecure and older Mainers. I also receive SNAP benefits. With food prices out of control, SNAP benefits are already way too low. I have suffered from food insecurity most of my adult life. I receive \$23 a month in SNAP benefits. It's kind of a slap in the face and at the same time it does help buy a few groceries each month. Because money is limited, some of my friends and I put our cash together to buy food so none of us go hungry.

All of these are examples of requiring the poor to jump through hoops to get the services we desperately need to survive. While much needed social programs get less funding, poverty continues to rapidly grow. Yet, somehow, more funding goes to corporate welfare with no accountability or transparency.

Gov. Mills and legislators, please pass a budget that will help Mainers like me thrive, not struggle. Thank you