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LD 210

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee and Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Ariana Gaston, and I am a preschool teacher in South Portland.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program.

Being a teacher has been one of the greatest gifts I could have received. Teaching and watching the growth the kids have made during the time I've taught them is what I love most about being a teacher. Even if at the end of the day I go home a mess and tired, I wouldn't trade it for the world. Being a teacher has a lot of great perks, but the education field can be financially tough. The money isn't what makes the job, though. The laughter, the love, and the fun environments we create for the kids to excel are worth so much more.

The subsidy the state gives us each month has been a blessing for teachers. It takes a lot of stress off us and always comes in handy when bills are hard to catch up on. On top of helping with bills, it makes us feel appreciated for the work we put into our jobs every day. I don't agree with it being taken away because that would make things more stressful, but if it does happen, I'll continue to be the best teacher I can be. Even though we may not get the pay we deserve, I'm happy every day when I go home because of the job I chose. I'm proud to teach and be a stepping stone in these kids' lives because creating a safe and fun environment for them as they learn is so important. The education system and how our teachers are treated are important too. I hope whoever this reaches that there's more thought put into making this decision. As a favorite quote of mine says "The influence of a good teacher can never be erased." - Unknown