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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Testimony of **David Swetland** before
the Committee On Appropriations and Financial Affairs and
the Committee on Health and Human Services
in opposition to
LD 210, the Governor's proposed Biennial Budget

February 10, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, and Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Committees On Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services, my name is David Swetland and I'm **a member of the Board at the Central Lincoln county YMCA and on the Childcare Task Force**. I am very concerned about the budget cuts to two critical initiatives that help stabilize the childcare sector by investing in our educators:

- Elimination of the Childcare Employment Award program (current investment of \$2.5 million per year) that helps childcare educators pay for their own childcare
- Cutting in half the Childcare Worker Stipends from \$30 million year to \$15 million per year.

As both of these programs are currently utilizing all their available funding, these cuts would have a significant negative impact on our field. Our workforce is critical to provide safe, reliable, quality care for Maine children so their parents can work.

We, at the CLC YMCA, are expanding our childcare program in response to the vital need for this service in our community. We deem that early education is critical to the wellbeing and success of our young people and a necessary service to the parents of these children who know that we will provide a safe and enriching experience to them and make it possible for the adults in the household to secure work away from home. We are a non-profit that raises money from our community each year to support this activity. Its funding does not come easily nor would it be sufficient to continue the program as it is, much less as we expand to fill the needs without the state funding.

I urge you to oppose these harmful budget cuts.