



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Testimony of Donna Marie Flanders 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 24, 2025

I am a lead teacher in one of our two 3-4 year old classrooms at the Bath Area Family YMCA, serving the communities of Bath, West Bath, Harpswell, Phippsburg, Woolwich, Arrowsic, and Georgetown. Our Enrichment Program serves nearly 90 students daily, with waitlists for many of the classrooms. There is a huge need for safe, reliable, childcare. I am extremely concerned about the proposed 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 \$2.5M/year) that helps childcare educators pay for their own childcare
- Cutting in half the **Childcare Worker Stipends** from \$30M/year to \$15M/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 ensure we can provide safe, reliable, quality care for Maine children so their parents can work. This is not a numbers game, this is about the livelihood of families, their ability to make a living wage, and the quality of education and care that they deserve. Investing in educators is investing in the future.

**I urge you to oppose these harmful budget cuts.**  
**The well-being of children & their families is at stake.**

Thank you for your consideration,  
Donna Marie Flanders  
Lead Teacher, Enrichment, Bath Area YMCA

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