

Katherine Johnston
Hallowell
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 Katherine Johnston. I am an independent consultant and live in Hallowell.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. As a parent of two young children, my family has lived through so much unnecessary change due to low wages in this field. The most powerful developmental support for kids is stable and loving relationships. But our child care providers cannot be stable sources of support if we don't pay them living wages. The supplement program stabilized a faltering field, held up by the grace and goodness of strong women, and now we are taking this minimal, VITAL support to them away. I want my kids to have stable, loving relationships with their teachers. The only way we can keep these teachers in the classroom is by providing them fair wages. They deserve far more than this.

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. What people don't see: the Child Care Employment Award not only helps to attract and retain child care providers, but it builds community. When I pick up my daughter from her child care center, I run into her classmate's mom, who is also a teacher in the school. She taught my older daughter. This employment award allows this building of community where we are parents together, classmates, teacher-student - all of these beautiful and meaningful relationships and community connections because of this very small amount of funding that helps the provider, her child, my child, and the school. Please understand the positive ripple effects that will be gutted if you eliminate this program.