

Patrick Mitchell
Portland
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 Patrick Mitchell. I am a parent and live in Portland.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. I am a parent of a child enrolled in Children's Odyssey, and I am deeply concerned about the proposed cuts in Governor Mills' budget, which would reduce funding for child care educator wages, Head Start programs, and eliminate the Child Care Employment Award. These cuts threaten the quality of care our children receive and the stability of the child care workforce. Please stand with families and child care providers by opposing these cuts. Our children's future depends on quality care and education.

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. My wife is a public school teacher in Portland. Her salary just barely covers the cost for us to send our two toddlers to preschool. We waited on waitlists for over a year, unsure if we could find care that would allow her to return to a career she loves teaching middle school English. For us it was not a financial decision. The smart financial decision would have been for her to stay out of the classroom and home with the kids. Without the existing childcare funding, she would have absolutely been forced to leave her school to care for the children.