

Dale Stephenson
South 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 Dale Stephenson LCSW. I am a retired therapist/consultant, early childhood focus and live in South Portland.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. Child care wages are already abysmally low, this program helps retain skilled early childhood educators. My granddaughter attends a preschool program that would be adversely affected by these proposed cuts.

I am opposed to the proposed \$3.6 million annual/\$7.2 million biennial cuts to general funds for Head Start. Headstart has been proven one of the most effective programs over many decades, to significantly improve outcomes (later education, employment) for children who attended Headstart.

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. Recruitment and retention of child care workers is key to allowing parents to access child care so they can work. Maine's workforce cannot afford to lose any more employees due to lack of child care.