

Alexa Kessler
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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 Alexa Kessler. I am a Director/Owner and live in Ellsworth.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. I am a new center just starting out. This means that I have to start my employees at the lower end of the wage tier. Right now I have multiple employees that would likely have to quit and find a higher paying job without the help of the monthly bonus. This would drastically impact my business and the loss of employees would be what forces me to close my doors after only being in operation as a new center for 7 months.

I am opposed to the proposed \$3.6 million annual/\$7.2 million biennial cuts to general funds for Head Start. Head start is critical to help children transition into school. Cutting this option for low income families would greatly impact all children in this state.

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. If this program is cut I would lose 90% of my employees. Due to the high overhead that is associated with childcare it is extremely difficult for owners to offer free or discounted tuition for their employees especially in a smaller setting like mine. I currently am licensed for 29 children and have 12 employees. Of these 12 employees, 9 of them have kids with a total of 16 staff children. This makes up almost half of my program. Without extra help to cover their children's spots I would not be able to stay operational. This would likely be another devastating impact to my business.