

Asia Watson
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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 Asia Watson. I am a stay at home mom and live in Skowhegan.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. Speaking from my personal experience in the early childhood Ed work force: Educators RAISE our most precious and vulnerable citizens already get paid the absolute BARE minimum. Childcare workers and early childhood educators already work long, tough, tiring hours. They are mentally and emotionally drained. Everyday they step in and do the work to raise an entire classroom worth of infants, toddlers and young children. It is NOT easy. Early childhood education is one of the MOST important facets of cultivating a strong country and we are LACKING. Taking away pay for these front line workers- Tackling some of the hardest work- working with low income families, educating families on how to cope- there's SO much they do that nobody ever sees or realizes. We need to support this workforce, more so now than ever.

I am opposed to the proposed \$3.6 million annual/\$7.2 million biennial cuts to general funds for Head Start. I just don't understand... why would you do this? This program helps so many young children who come from nothing or come from abusive backgrounds, foster care, etc. going to school is often their safe space, and those teachers are their safe people. These programs have PROVEN positive outcomes for low income children who otherwise might not have had much of a chance from the getgo... these programs NEED SUPPORT. Why are we talking about taking anything away???

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. How are childcare workers going to provide appropriate, high quality care if we can't even afford to send our own children to care because we don't get paid enough to afford it. Make it make sense.