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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 Ashley Curbelo. I work in Financial Services and live in Scarborough.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. Our daycare/preschool has had - as many have - an incredibly difficult time hiring and maintaining competent staff in the three years our kids have been in their care. With attrition, they have had to close 2-3 classrooms at any given time due to staffing.

These cuts threaten the stability of child care providers and undermine the quality of early childhood education. Our educators, who play a crucial role in shaping the future of Maine's children, deserve support, not cuts. These reductions would only increase the challenges families face in accessing affordable, high-quality care.

I urge you to stand with Maine's children and child care workers by rejecting these cuts and advocating for the funding necessary to support Maine's future.

I am opposed to the proposed \$3.6 million annual/\$7.2 million biennial cuts to general funds for Head Start. I am 36 today and a proud head start graduate. I've since completed undergrad in Maine and graduate school at Vanderbilt University. My head start teacher is a waitress in my home town and I still see her when I visit for a meal - and thank her for building a foundation of learning that served me so well.

These cuts will strip away opportunity from economically disadvantaged families and their children in the short term, and rob Maine of competent leaders, impactful team mates and members of our communities in the future.

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. I know of three mothers at my daycare in the last year who have their children in care - and pulling this funding means ripping these women out of the workforce and creating a care in shortage for families all over the state. Without care, women are statistically more likely to leave the workforce to care for their children, unwinding decades of work to create opportunity for women.