

## **Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Joint Standing Committees**

Good Morning, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Members of the Joint Standing Committee On Appropriations and Financial Affairs, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony in opposition to reductions in support to Child Care Educator wages, the Child Care Employment Award, and to Head Start.

My name is Alyssa Goodwin, MD. I live in Brunswick and have been a pediatrician in the Midcoast region for over 20 years. I serve on the board of directors of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and chair the Maine AAP School Health Committee.

Thank you for your thought and consideration in navigating this very difficult budgeting season. High quality childcare is the backbone of the Maine economy. Without reliable and affordable child care options, many hard working Mainers, particularly women, face significant barriers to employment, leading to reduced household income and lower productivity.

Childcare is an industry already struggling with recruitment and retention. Programs like the Maine's Child Care Employment Award are essential to keeping workers in the field and ensuring the sustainability of child care services. By investing in child care professionals and making their work more financially feasible, we can create a more stable workforce and improve the quality of care for Maine's children.

Many of the families I have cared for benefited from head start and early head start programming to engage their children in high quality early childhood education. These opportunities allow children who would otherwise not have access to preschool to be better prepared for the behavioral and academic expectations when they enter the school system in PreK or Kindergarten. I see the positive effects on these children and their families as I watch them grow and develop.

The Return on Investment of these services is remarkable. \$1 spent on Head Start produces a return on investment of \$7-\$9 per year, and high-quality Birth-to-Five education and support yields a similar ROI of 13%.

The budget is difficult but the decision must be clear. Continuing to invest in quality child care and Head Start ensures a stable workforce, fosters economic resilience, and supports the well-being of families. Our future is counting on it.

Alyssa Goodwin MD, FAAP  
14 Sand hill Drive

Brunswick, ME 04011  
askdrgoodwin1@gmail.com