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LD 210

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable committee members, my name is Julie Bourgeois, I live in Gray, and I am

submitting testimony today in support of Maine's early childhood education system. I am due with my first child this coming May - right around my next birthday! My husband and I are so excited to expand our family, but of course there are also many nerves that come with that expansion. We have lined up childcare for when we return to

work, but that was not without stress. My husband and I strongly support paying child care workers a strong wage - we want to make sure that people are compensated fairly for their work in supporting, educating, and raising our children.

The proposed cuts in this budget to various aspects of the child care system make me nervous for what my kid will experience when it comes time to go to care. Will the agency I have chosen still have their doors open? Will the care workers employed there

make enough money to support their own families?

Many of my friends are having or have had children within the past few years - or want

to. The high cost of childcare is an ongoing discussion within my friend group. We all want the best for our children. Our kids deserve compassionate and caring workers.

Our

kids deserve agencies that are fully staffed and well funded. These workers deserve to have the same care for their own children. Cutting programs that make it possible for child care employees to enroll their own children in care so they can work is not the way

forward. We should be expanding and investing in these programs so all parents in Maine, regardless of income or familial support, have the support they need. I urge this

committee to invest in these programs instead of cutting them.