

Melanie Blair
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LD 1191

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Health and Human Services Committee
132nd Maine State Legislature
Regarding L.D. 1191-An Act to Ensure Timely Reimbursement for Providers of Child Care Services for Children in Foster Care.

Honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am sharing this testimony in favor of LD 1191.

As a foster parent of approximately ten years, I am dependent on quality, accessible, childcare in which I feel safe bringing my children to. I have formed very supportive relationships with the daycare in Lewiston where more children than I can recall, have attend for however long those children resided with me for the last nine years.

In February of 24, the department stopped paying two of my foster children's bill. This occurred over several months, contacting several different people who always referred me as well as the childcare director to yet another person. By September, I was given notice that I would need to withdraw those two children, but the other two that were being paid (not timely, but between 4&6 weeks) would be able to stay.

I cannot tell you how disruptive, stressful and unnecessary this was. Our focus as caregivers is to love on, provide for, and keep these children safe with as few disruptions as possible. My family needs childcare, not just any childcare but one we trust and have a great relationship. The two children being referenced here had regular behavior outbursts. They likely would not have been able to maintain in many other daycares. Consistency is paramount for children that have experienced trauma.

My story did have a successful outcome. As a last ditch effort I emailed Director Johnson for help, as I would not be able to maintain placement if I lost their childcare. She had it resolved within a day, and for that I was grateful. Though, it should not take going all the way up to her to get a bill paid. I am certain she has many other things to spend her time on.

I cannot imagine operating a business waiting six months to be paid. I sincerely hope you will consider the position this would put you in. It is unacceptable to expect providers to wait that long and be able to keep their business open.

Thank you for considering LD 1191 and pay these providers within 15 days,

Melanie Blair