



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Testimony of Faith Boynton before
the Committee on Health and Human Services
in support of

**LD 1389: An Act to Create the Building Opportunity Through
Out-of-School Time Program**

April 04, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Faith Boynton and I'm the Youth Development Director at the Waldo County YMCA. I support LD 1389: *An Act to Create the Building Opportunity Through Out-of-School Time Program*.

The 15 YMCAs in Maine are collectively the largest childcare provider in the state. We served 24,000 school-age children last year through before/after school care, summer camp, and youth sports. These safe, nurturing, and enriching programs are essential for working parents and our economy. Research shows these programs boost student engagement, improve attendance, reduce risky behaviors, and promote social-emotional growth. With access to homework help, healthy meals, and trusted mentors, kids thrive both in and out of the classroom.

YMCA school-age youth programs are consistently at capacity, with long waitlists across many sites. While we work hard to stretch resources and fundraise to keep programs affordable and accessible, our ability to expand is limited by challenges like staffing, space, and transportation. In addition, we're seeing a significant rise in behavioral challenges among the children we serve, and we need more resources to support them effectively.

The BOOST bill is an exciting step toward expanding access to school-age childcare for Maine families, especially those that are at-risk or underserved. This grant program would help community-based organizations, including the YMCA, create new programs, grow existing ones, and overcome barriers that prevent families from accessing quality care.

Our school-age enrichment programs are designed with one goal in mind: to build healthy, confident kids who are ready for academic and career success. Through a mix of hands-on activities, academic support, and life skills development, we empower our students to thrive both inside and outside the classroom. We focus on fostering resilience, curiosity, and critical thinking, providing them with the tools they need to excel in their studies and beyond. The results speak for themselves—our kids are not only achieving academic success but are also developing a strong sense of self and a vision for their future careers.

What's even more rewarding is seeing many of our program children grow up and return to work at the Y in the childcare department. This full circle of commitment is a testament to the lasting impact of our programs. These young adults strive to be leaders, showing great empathy toward those younger than them. We feel truly blessed to have these Y kids as part of our staff. It shows just how deeply our programs shape their lives and inspire them to give back to the next generation.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Boynton

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