



Testimony of Jon Solomon 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 7, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Jon Solomon and I'm the Chief Executive Officer at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Border Towns. I support LD 1389: *An Act to Create the Building Opportunity Through Out-of-School Time Program*.

Boys & Girls Clubs fill the gap between school and home. We provide welcoming, positive environments in which kids and teens have fun, participate in life-changing programs and experiences, and build supportive relationships with peers and caring adults. Boys & Girls Clubs in Maine collectively serve over 8,000 school-age youth at 18 Club sites across the state.

Research shows that afterschool and summer programs, like Boys & Girls Clubs, 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. However, according to the National Afterschool Alliance, in Maine, for every one child enrolled in an afterschool program, there are five waiting to get in. Parents also recognize the benefits of afterschool and summer programs with 83% of Maine parents agreeing that afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs.

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

At the Boys & Girls Clubs of Border Towns, we serve both Native and non-Native youth across four locations in Aroostook, Penobscot, and Washington counties. In communities like Sipayik, where there are no other options for youth engagement, our Clubs are a critical lifeline—offering a safe, supportive space that keeps kids off the streets and away from harmful behaviors like vandalism and substance misuse. The need for before- and after school care, vacation programming, and summer camp is growing rapidly, especially among Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Penobscot Nation families. These programs offer more than a place to go; they are vital spaces for cultural pride, academic support, and social-emotional development. Our enrichment programs help youth build confidence, stay active, and discover their potential through mentorship, STEM activities, sports, and career readiness. Our goal is to build strong, resilient kids who are confident in their identity and prepared for success in school, work, and life.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Solomon

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