



Testimony of Catherine Myatt 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 Catherine Myatt and I'm the CEO at the Boys & Girls Club of Bangor. 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.

At the Boys & Girls Club of Bangor, we witness every day the life-changing impact of afterschool and summer programming. Our Club provides a safe, supportive environment where youth build confidence, strengthen academic skills, and develop positive relationships with peers and mentors. These programs are especially important for working families who rely on us to care for their children during the hours when school is out, but parents are still at work. Our Club primarily serves youth and families living in Bangor's public housing neighborhood, where barriers to childcare—especially cost and transportation—are persistent challenges that significantly impact economic mobility.

Despite our best efforts, demand for our programs exceeds our capacity—we currently have a waitlist of over 40 children. Staffing shortages, limited space, and transportation challenges prevent us from serving more families. The BOOST bill would provide critical resources to help us grow our team, expand our reach, and deliver essential services like meals, behavioral health support, and financial assistance. BOOST is an investment in children's safety, well-being, and Maine's future.

Thank you for considering this important legislation. I urge you to support LD 1389 and help ensure all Maine youth have access to the opportunities they deserve.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Myatt".

Catherine Myatt, CEO
Boys & Girls Club of Bangor

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