



Testimony of J.R. Kenny 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 8, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is J.R. Kenny and I'm the Lead Director of Government Relations at the Maine Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs and Boys & Girls Clubs of America. I support LD 1389: *An Act to Create the Building Opportunity Through Out-of-School Time Program*.

On behalf of the 18 Boys & Girls Clubs sites across Maine and 8,000+ youth Clubs serve annually, we believe that youth need a welcoming, positive environment in which they can have fun, participate in life-changing programs and experiences, and build supportive relationships with peers and caring adults. The Building Opportunity Through Out-of-School Time (BOOST) program provides after-school and summer program providers needed resources to expand access to out-of-school time programming for Maine families, especially those that are at-risk or underserved.

The need is urgent—and growing. The BOOST Program would provide critically needed resources to help organizations like ours **expand capacity, launch new programs, and remove financial and logistical barriers** that prevent children from participating.

Boys & Girls Clubs across Maine provide essential out-of-school time (OST) programming that fills the critical gap between school dismissal and when parents return from work. Our programs are more than just a safe place to be—they are hubs of opportunity, learning, support, and growth.

Research shows that afterschool and summer programs, like Boys & Girls Clubs, increase 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. 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.

This is not just an investment in afterschool programs, it's an investment in Maine's future workforce, health, and prosperity. 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. According to a new study, Boys & Girls Clubs produce significant valuable benefits for people and society, making them a sound investment. For every \$1 invested in Clubs, \$10.32 in returned in economic benefits to Club members, their families and society.

I respectfully urge you to vote in support of LD 1389. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Maine's children and families.

Respectfully submitted,

J.R. Kenny

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